

# **Grandpa's Ramblings**

**An old man  
Who is still...**

**A “kid” at heart!**

**Stories by and About**

**John Derrill Bills**

**Compiled by Cheryl Harmon Bills**

## Introduction

Over the years I've known John, I have always loved hearing his "stories." They helped me become acquainted with him in the beginning and continue to entertain and interest me as time goes by. In fact, John's stories have so fascinated me that I often carry a pad and pen so I can write them down as he's telling me about his charmed and incredible life! I've never known anyone like him! He is so amazing and I knew that I needed to capture these stories for posterity or the world would surely be a poorer place!

When I determined to write this book, I wanted John's stories in his own words and for the most part, have succeeded in getting him to tell and retell them to me as I typed away. What fun this has been. Mine has been the best job of all! Although you can read the stories in his own words, I get to hear him tell them, to hear his laugh as he recalls them, and to feel his personality in every experience. We also had lots of one-on-one time as we have worked on this project together. What a lucky woman I am to have John in my life – not only for time, but in conjunction with his beloved Joyanne and their children– for eternity!

I am deeply indebted to Joyanne and to John's mother, Frances, for their record keeping! They have made the first part of this book possible. I also deeply appreciate all that John's siblings have shared to enrich this book. Thanks a million!

All I ever wanted to be when I was growing up was a "mother." How I love and cherish my children and grandchildren. Once my family grew up, they have not lived nearby, so it is to my step-children I have turned to fill in that empty gap in my life and I love and cherish them as I do my own children and grandchildren! For some of John's grandchildren, I am the only "Grandma" they know– and I want them to know that I love them dearly. They couldn't be more special to me if they were my own flesh and blood.

In fact, Joyanne Fife Bills and I are 5<sup>th</sup> cousins - 1 generation removed! Our common ancestors are Thomas Hartford Heath and Mary Magdalena Walrath. I descend from their son, Adolph, and Joyanne descends from their son, John Walderod Heath. When their parents died, Adolph, who was an older son, became guardian of John, his younger brother. So – we really are related! And I now stand as guardian of Joyanne's children and grandchildren – a charge I do not take lightly!

Being the genealogist that I am, I realize the importance of family history with every passing year. When John and I lost our mothers in 2006, forever silenced were the stories we used to hear from them. Now we can only tell "our" version. I can't let that happen with John's stories.

John has a "way with words" that no one I have ever known (except maybe his daughter, Jeni) has. His laughter, fluency of speech, diction, and "gift of gab" cannot be equaled. His knowledge of the English language and punctuation is superb! As he has dictated story after story to me, he instructs where to add comma's, colons, and new paragraphs. It is so funny as I



will find myself typing the word “comma” when he says comma in the midst of a story! So if you find any we missed in our proof-reading, please just know where it came from!

Many are the times I have heard our children and grandchildren say to him, “Tell me about the time....” Well, here we are – with Grandpa’s Ramblings! Your Grandpa is “one of a kind!” We all LOVE his stories.

John claims he had a Tom Sawyer Childhood – and truly he enjoyed a freedom that is just not known among young people today. The world was a much safer place then – and John was a trustworthy youngster. He never wanted to do anything to disappoint his parents or bring dishonor to his name! John was “all boy!” Enjoy the book!

I love you forever! I love you for always!  
As long as forever, your Grandma I’ll be!

Lovingly,  
“Grandma Cheryl”

### *Snoring*

My children tell me that my snore  
Is louder than the thunder’s roar  
“Oh, Mom, Be sure to close your door!  
I can’t sleep when I hear you snore!”

Though my children are grown and gone away.  
Many times I’ve heard them say  
“Mom’s loud snoring kept them awake.”  
I tried to quit just for their sake.

I put tape recorders by my bed--  
A pillow covering up my head  
And still it seemed that my loud snore  
Was similar to a lion’s roar!

I have come full circle now  
My new husband snores—and how!  
If he falls asleep before I can  
I know that I have found my man!

As I listen to John’s LOUD snore  
I thank the Lord that I’m alone no more.  
What a blessed sound that snoring is—  
And I know that I am really his.

When we go to bed at night  
We kiss and hold each other tight.  
Then I turn left and he turns right  
And we both snore till morning light!

By Cheryl Bills

# Grandpa's Ramblings

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An  
Old Man

Who Is Still.....  
A Kid at Heart!!!



**I Am A Mormon Boy:**



# STATE OF UTAH — DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

## STATE OF UTAH CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH

State File No. **3652**

Registrar's No. **415**

### 1. PLACE OF BIRTH:

(a) County **Salt Lake**  
(b) City or town **Murray**  
(If outside city or town limits write RURAL)  
(c) Name of hospital or institution **WATKINS HOSPITAL**  
(If not in hospital or institution give street number or location)  
(d) Mother's stay before delivery **1 hr** In this community **5 yrs**  
(Specify whether years, months, or days)

### 2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER:

(a) State **Utah**  
(b) County **Salt Lake**  
(c) City or town **Sandy**  
(If outside city or town limits write RURAL)  
(d) Street No. **280 East 6th So**  
(If rural give location)

3. Full name of child **John Derrill Bills**  
(Leave blank if child has not been named) **420**

4. Date of birth **7-15-45**  
(month) (day) (year)

5. Sex **Male**

6. Twin or Triplet

If so—born 1st, 2nd or 3rd

7. Number months of pregnancy **9**

8. Is mother married? **yes**

### FATHER OF CHILD

9. Full name **Derrill Smith Bills**  
10. Color or race **wh** 11. Age at time of this birth **28** yrs.  
12. Birthplace **Riverton Utah**  
(City, town, or county) (State or foreign country)  
13. Usual occupation **Payroll clerk**  
14. Industry or business **Utah Copper**

### MOTHER OF CHILD

15. Full maiden name **Frances Jeanette Tennant**  
16. Color or race **wh** 17. Age at time of this birth **27** yrs.  
18. Birthplace **Salt Lake City Utah**  
(City, town, or county) (State or foreign country)  
19. Usual occupation **Housewife**  
20. Industry or business **Own Home**

### 21. Children born to this mother:

(a) How many other children of this mother are now living? **11**  
(b) How many other children were born alive but are now dead? **0**  
(c) How many children were born dead? **0**

### 22. Mother's mailing address for registration notice:

**280 E. 6th So Sandy**  
Was mother's blood tested serologically? **yes** Date **June 1945**  
If not, state why?

23. I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child who was born alive at the hour of **7:30** pm. on the date above stated and that the information given was furnished by **Frances Jeanette Bills**, related to this child as **mother**

24. Date received by local registrar **7-2-45**

Attendant's own signature **J. T. Stevenson**

25. Registrar's own signature **Mildred McConnochie**

M. D., midwife, or other **M. D.** Date signed **7-20-45**

26. Given name added from supplemental report

Address **Draper Utah**

This is to certify that this is a true copy of the certificate on file in this office. This certified copy is issued under authority of section 26-2-22 of the Utah Code Annotated, 1953 As Amended.

Date Issued:

**SEP 10 2003**

**Barry E Nangle**

Barry E. Nangle

DIRECTOR OF VITAL RECORDS

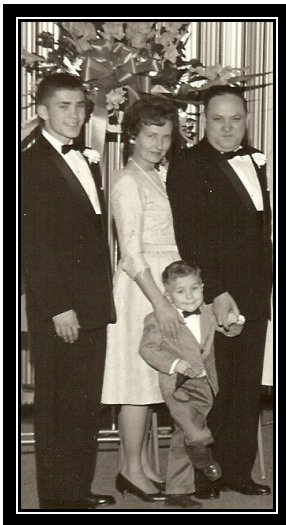
SL **286456**



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John, Jeff & parents

# I AM A MORMON BOY

Evan Stephens

Evan Stephens

Earnestly ♩ = 63-80

1. Kind friends, as here I stand to sing And look in - to your eyes,  
 2. I'm proud to know that I was born On earth in these last days,  
 3. My fa - ther is a Mor-mon true, And when I am a man,

I feel as if I have in - side A doz - en but - ter - flies;  
 That I've been taught to love the truth And serve in man - y ways;  
 I want to be like him and do just all the good I can.

But nev - er mind, for I'm a boy Who's al - ways full of joy—  
 Yet I con - fess that some-times I Still man - age to an - noy  
 My faults I'll try to o - ver - come, And while I life en - joy.

A brave and will - ing sort of chap—An hon - est Mor - mon boy.  
 My dear - est friends, but that's a fault Of many a Mor - mon boy.  
 With pride I'll lift my head and say, "I am a Mor - mon boy."

A Mor-mon boy, a Mor-mon boy, I am a Mor-mon boy;

I might be on - vied by a king, For I am a Mor - mon boy.

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Sandy Fourth Ward Mt. Jordan Stake

### Certificate of Baptism and Confirmation

This Certifies that John Derrill Bills Date Nov 1, 1953  
Son of Derrill S. Bills and James Jennette  
Son or Daughter Father's Name Mother's Maiden Name  
 Born July 15, 1945 at Murray Salt Lake Utah  
Date City or Town County State or Nation  
 was baptized Oct 30, 1953 by Derrill S. Bills Elder or Priest  
Date  
 and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Nov 1, 1953  
 by Elder Derrill S. Bills Date  
 Signed Orin J. Greenwood Clerk Signed John E. Rich Bishop

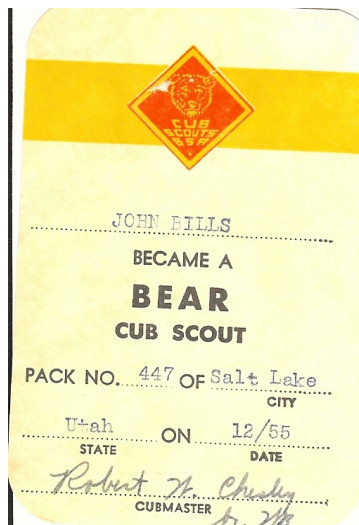
John was baptized and confirmed by his father when he was 8 years old. His baptismal date was 30 Oct 1953 and he was confirmed on 1 Nov 1953. He became a member of the Sandy Fourth Ward in the Mt. Jordan Stake.

His mother kept the following record of John's church history as a young boy:

**Primary History:**

Blazer: 1954-1955; teacher Betty Tolman  
 Trekker: 1955-56 teacher: Belva Simonson  
 Top Pilot: 1953-54; teacher  
 Guide: 1956-57: teachers: Shirley Chelsey, Betty Lewis  
 Cub Scout Leader: Frances Bills  
 Became a tenderfoot  
 Dec. 5, 1956 Played accordion on program: teacher Betty Fowlks  
 Primary Graduate July 1957  
 Baptized for dead Sep 28, 1955; 17 April 1956

At the age of ten years, John earned his Bear Rank in Cub Scouting. Robert W. Chesley was his Cub Master in Pack 447. His mother was his Scout Leader.



At the age of 12, John was ordained a Deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood on 8 Sep

1957 by his father, Derrill S. Bills. He was a member of the Sandy 4<sup>th</sup> Ward in Mt. Jordan Stake. His Bishop was Wilford Adams. When John was ordained a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, Bishop Adams officiated. When John was ordained a Priest at the age of 16, his Bishop was Reed W. Anderson.

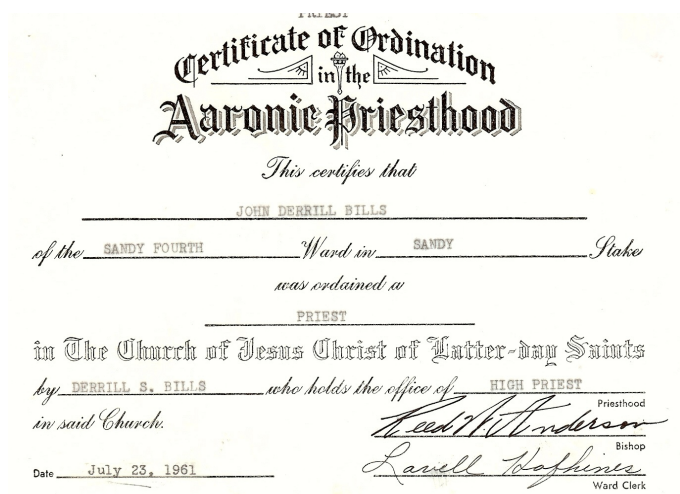
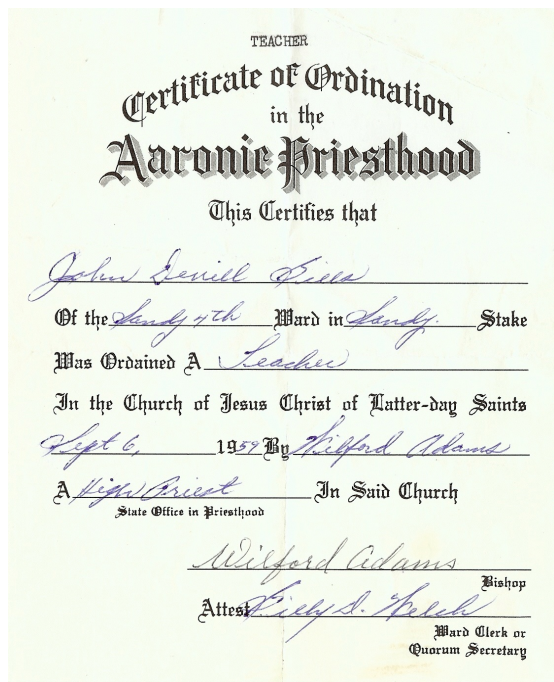
DEACON

### Certificate of Ordination in the Aaronic Priesthood

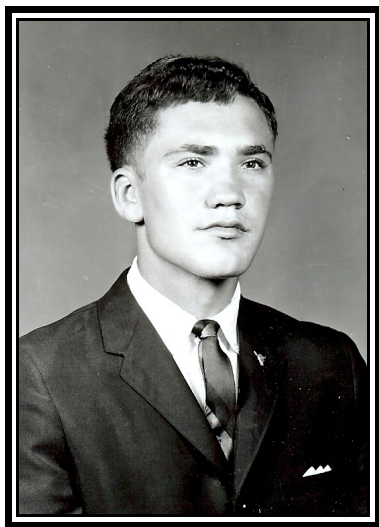
This Certifies that John Derrill Bills  
 Of the Sandy 4 Ward in Mt. Jordan Stake  
 Was Ordained A Deacon  
 In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Sept 8 1957 By Derrill S. Bills  
 A Elder In Said Church  
State Office in Priesthood  
Wilford Adams Bishop  
 Attest Thomas D. Adams Ward Clerk or Quorum Secretary

Yes! I Am A Mormon Boy!

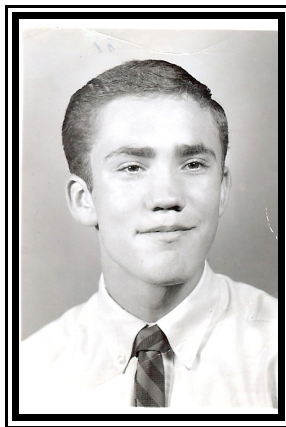




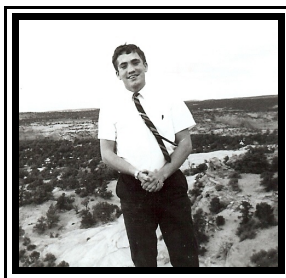
I've been taught to love the truth and serve in many ways.



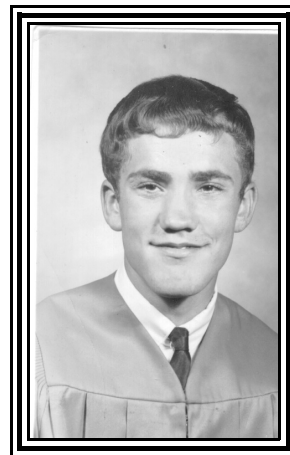
John's missionary photo



John Derrill Bills as a teenager.



Elder John Bills



John's Graduation photo



Elder Bills after receiving his temple endowment.



Frances, John and Derrill at Salt Lake Temple after John's endowments.

## Record of Membership and Priesthood Ordinations in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

**Name & Blessing:** 30 Sep 1945 by Derrill S. Bills, Elder

**Baptism:** 30 Oct 1953 by Derrill S. Bills, Elder

**Confirmation:** 1 Nov 1953 by Derrill S. Bills, Elder

**Deacon:** 8 Sep 1957 by Derrill S. Bills, Elder

**Teacher:** 6 Sep 1959 by Wilford Adams, Bishop

**Priest:** 23 Jul 1961 by Derrill S. Bills, High Priest

**Elder:** 31 May 1964 by Derrill S. Bills, High Priest

**Missionary:** Entered Mission Home: 24 Aug 1964

Set apart on 26 Aug 1964 by Thomas S. Monson, General Authority, High Priest Southwest Indian Mission

**Endowments:** 28 Aug 1964 in Salt Lake Temple

**Temple Sealing to Joyanne Fife:** 23 Nov 1966 in Salt Lake Temple

**High Priest:** 16 Jun 1991 by Kenneth Howell, High Priest and brother-in-law & Stake President.

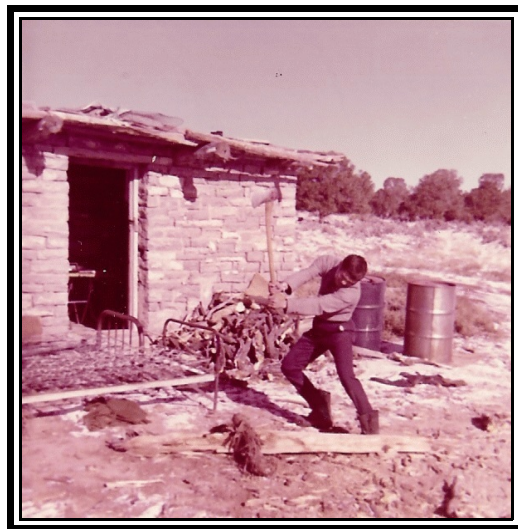
**Temple Sealing to Cheryl Harmon Bean:** 22 April 2000 in Idaho Falls Temple

**Missionary:** Set Apart 16 Apr 2009 by Bishop Chance Eckman, High Priest; began serving 19 Apr 2009 at Heber Valley Camp 6-month Service Mission.

A brave and willing sort of chap – an honest  
Mormon Boy!

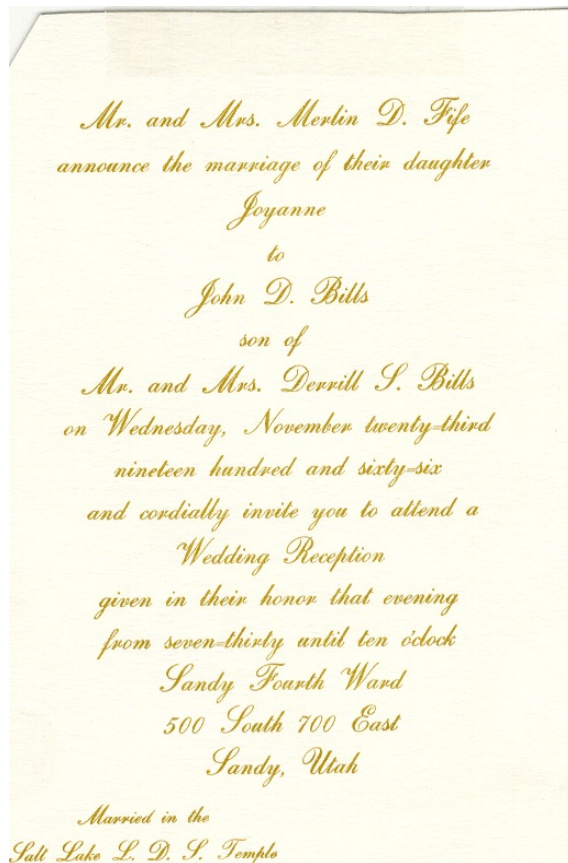


Elder Bills leaving on his mission 8/31/1964 on Frontier Airlines flew to Holbrook, Arizona from Salt Lake City.



John's rock hut, bed, water barrels and he is chopping wood for heat as he is truly "roughing it" on his Mission among the Navajo people.





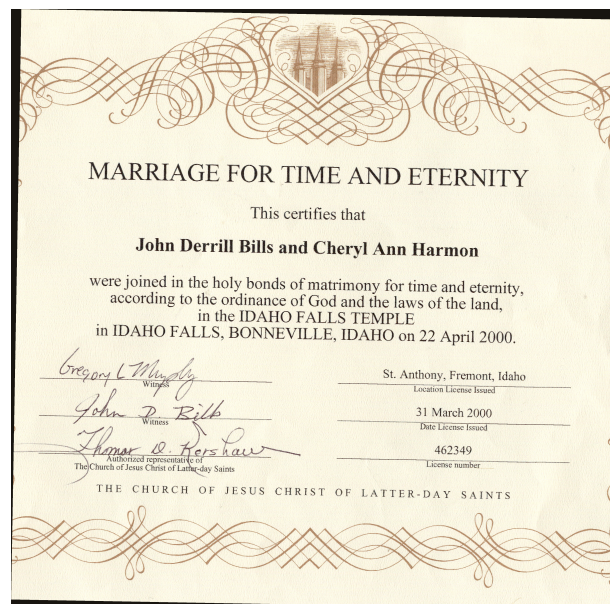
As I look into your eyes ....., I feel as if I have inside...a dozen butterflies...

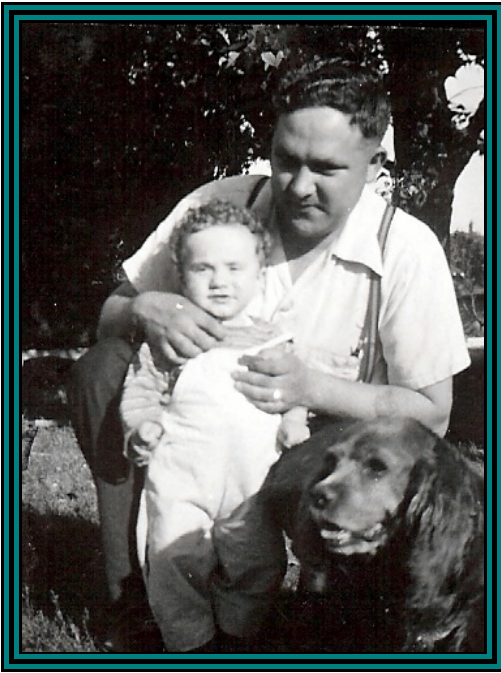


John and Joyanne at reception



Cheryl and John at Idaho Falls Temple after wedding





John with his father and pet dog.



Bus and John with the catch of the day! One of many father and son outings where a love of fishing was born.

I'm a boy who's always full of joy!



BYU Graduate

My father is a Mormon true.  
And when I am a man,  
I want to be just like him and  
Do all the good I can.  
My faults I'll try to overcome,  
And while I life enjoy,  
With pride I'll lift my head and say,  
"I am a Mormon boy!"



A fun father!

Joy, John David, John, Joey, Jamie, Jeni and Jade Bills





Joey, Jamie, Jeni, John David and John



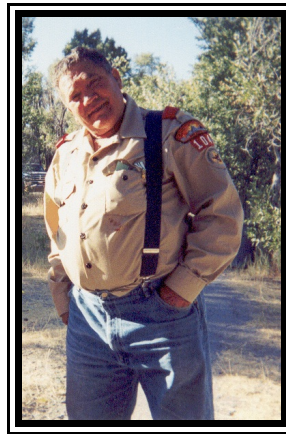
John welcoming Jade home from his mission.



Mormon Pioneers



Step-children at George Bean's funeral: Bryan, Sharon, Suzanne, Tom, Greg, Doug, Bill, Steve, in front is Amy, widow, and Cheryl



A lover of Scouting



Our Mission Picture

I might be envied by a King....



Sister and Elder Bills during mission at Heber Valley Camp 2009; we lived in our camper, rode 4-wheelers; wore blue jeans and had great spiritual experiences!



As a Mormon Boy and a Mormon Man,  
I live the very best I can!



## LIFE HISTORY OF JOHN DERRILL BILLS

(July 15, 1945 —

I am the third-borne of seven children of Frances Tennant and Derrill Smith Bills of the once small and rural South Salt Lake Valley town of Sandy, Utah.

At various times, John has begun writing his own personal history. Included here are the ones I have been able to locate and some things Joyanne wrote of their life together. I have also included excerpts from letters and journals.

During my childhood, my mom worked part-time as a registered nurse for several hospitals and also provided daily good Samaritan care for many home-bound and elderly neighbors in the neighborhood.

My father worked in the payroll office for Kennecott Copper Corporation for over 30 years of his adult life. As a young man, he served in the Navy and was subsequently drafted into the Army. He also served a three-year mission in the Samoan Islands.

My parents were cheerleaders together in the mid-1930s at Jordan High-School in Sandy, Utah—the same school I and my siblings later attended.



Kay holding Patti, Mom, Dad, Karren, John and Clare

My parents were always busy in church. Mom served in Relief Society and Primary Presidencies and Dad served in a Bishopric, so church participation has been a continual blessing in my life.

Being a middle child with five sisters to occupy my Mom in teaching them proper etiquette and domestic crafts, I led the ideal unfettered Huck-Finn existence. I learned to relish both industry and play. I mowed and watered the lawns, raised pigeons, did home repairs and yard maintenance for elderly neighbors; painted, sold night crawlers, fished regularly and occasionally sold Jordan River carp to elderly widows who claimed, “Carp are an Eastern delicacy.”

As a teenager, I hoed sugar beets, picked strawberries and tomatoes, worked on a maintenance crew and took care of a park for the Salt Lake County recreation department, delivered office supplies in the middle of Salt Lake City, and worked on the track gang at the copper mine.

As a teenager, I hoed sugar beets, picked



Clare, Patti, Mom, John and Kay in front of Sandy home.

I hiked; collected and raised short-term: mice, lizards, frogs, and snakes; hunted birds and rabbits, built rafts - and later bought rubber ones- to conquer our canals, ponds and lakes. I slept outdoors a lot. At age seven, I shot my first pheasant with a Christmas gift cork gun, and when I subsequently acquired a Daisy Red-Ryder BB gun, Sandy City was bequeathed with a free and uninvited abatement program for grasshoppers, hornets, and pesky birds.

I never got to experience scouting, computer games or Little League sports like kids today, but at Dad's initiative, our fathers took us neighborhood boys on hunting and fishing safaris to Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah's southern and western deserts. (Surely the Lord must have recognized my love of the outdoors, when my later mission call was to preach in short-sleeve shirts to the Navajo Indians in the canyons and desert lands of Southern Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.)



## JOHN'S HISTORY



John and Joyanne; Sweetheart Ball 1962

Our home was a singing home. We all played a

musical instrument and sang songs around the kitchen sink.

This particular history was written in 2007 when John was asked to share his personal history in his High Priests quorum in St. Anthony 3<sup>rd</sup> ward.

I met my first wife, Joyanne, during the summer preceding my sophomore year in high school. She attended my Sunday school class with a girlfriend. As class president, I asked her to give the closing prayer and later my friend, Ed Ellswood, and I invited the two gals for a picnic on the Sandy Stake office lawn. We dated all through high school and we got married on Thanksgiving Break three months after I returned home from my mission.



Patti, Clare, Karren, Kay, John; Jeff, Mom, Dad -1960

I joined the National Guard with several high school friends during my Senior year and trained as a medic the following summer and fall. Our group from the Salt Lake Valley was so large that the Army put us all together into one company for basic training and assigned an inactive drill sergeant as our leader. We became known as the "Mormon Battalion" and had quite an effect on the military establishment and our leader as well.

I was a member of the National Guard for twenty-four years—twelve of which were spent supporting the Idaho Falls, Rigby, Rexburg, and St. Anthony units. I got to see a lot of sage-brush all over the west. I ran on The Idaho National Guard Marathon Team for two years in National competition at Lincoln, Nebraska and placed respectably. In addition to my medical services, I

held other occupational specialties as a cook, a demolition specialist, a supply sergeant, and an ammunition truck driver. I appreciate the Guard for the many friendships it afforded and for the medical retirement benefits I now receive.

At age nineteen, I chose to go on a mission. Although my testimony of the church was incomplete, I felt the Church represented so much good and was such a blessing in my life that I



About 400 East Main Saint Anthony

was obliged to the Lord, to my parents, and to my future wife, to give the Lord two full-time years of service.

I worked among the Navajo Indians and lived the first year of my mission in a rock hut without power or water 150 miles from the nearest town. We slept out nine months a year and only went inside the hut to cook on our wood-burning tin stove when the snow drove us in. My study room was a slab of sandstone rock overlooking cedar trees and sage brush.

I got particularly involved with LDS Social Services in recruitment and selection of children in the LDS Indian Student Placement program of the church. My parents became foster parents for several Navajo children over the years as a result of my mission and continued as foster parents for many other children in the Salt Lake valley who were removed from home for various reasons.



Yellow house by Catholic Church abt 29 N. 4<sup>th</sup> West in St. Anthony

During the second year of my mission I was called as an instructor in our language-training school for the missionaries on the reservation, and when I returned home and resumed studies at BYU, I helped start the Navajo Language school at the Mission Training Center—then known as the Language Training Mission. The Navajo language afforded me employment during all of my college years at BYU and a continuing relationship with all the missionaries who would carry the gospel to the Indian people. My mission among a poor, struggling, and disadvantaged people, led me to the choice of a social work profession.

After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree, I returned to the reservation and coordinated Indian seminary programs for the church for one year. My oldest daughter, Jamie, learned to speak Navajo through her association with other children who spoke only Navajo. At the end of that contract year, with the Church Education System, my wife, Joyanne, reminded me that it was time to return to civilization and asked me if I wanted to go with her. We returned to BYU where I continued to work on a Master's Degree.



John David, Jamie, Jeni, Jade and Joey Bills

In August 1972, I accepted employment at the Youth Training Center in St. Anthony, Idaho as a social worker and as a coordinator of research. In 1976, I moved into community social services with an office in the Fremont County Court House. I provided social services for Fremont and Teton Counties to the elderly and disabled, single parents, developmentally disabled children, neglected and abused children, and did custody home-studies for the court.

We lived in this ward for five years at that time. Bishop Eckman was one of my cub scouts; Bishop Allen was our Bishop; President Hawkes was in the Stake Presidency; and Bishop Romrell was my EMT instructor. Hubert Hackworth was the neighborhood grocer, and did a great job disciplining one of my children who showed up at the store with \$20 to spend on penny candy. Davy Douglas and Sam Christiansen were still learning how to catch fish back then.

We moved to Sugar City in 1980 and I was given child protection coverage for Teton, Fremont, Madison, Jefferson, and Clark counties as the sole representative of the department. That job kept me running 24 hours a day!

I learned to spend every valuable moment I could with my family, carried my fishing pole in the car, and found working with healthy, unruly scouts was a welcome change of pace.

In Oct 1996, I lost my beloved wife. She was struck as a pedestrian by a vehicle on Highway 20 near Sugar while we were out walking. Even with all my medical training, I couldn't keep her here.

In April 2000, I married my good friend and confidant, (she says I better make this good) Cheryl Bean. She was sealed to me in the



Joyanne Fife Bills



Cheryl Harmon Bills

temple, so I guess I am going to be a polygamist in the eternities! We have really enjoyed the time and companionship this chapter in our lives has offered us. Between us we have 13 children, five of mine and eight of Cheryl's. We've also been foster parents for other children both before and during our marriage. We currently have 36 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



2192 East Hwy 33 Sugar City, ID

My oldest daughter, Jamie, graduated from BYU with an RN degree, but is home as a full-time mom to eight children in American Fork, Utah. She is married to Dennis Isaacson. Jennifer is a mother of four and lives in Rexburg and is married to Kory Fogle. She has taught many piano students through the years and continues to share her talents in countless ways; John David served a mission to Italy and graduated from Utah State and now lives in Idaho Falls with his wife, Wanita Taylor, and three children. Joey has a home in Ashton, but currently lives in Roberts, Idaho. He is attending school to obtain a nursing degree and supports his family by building beautiful log furniture in the evenings and weekends. He and his wife, Amber Hibbard, have two sons. Jade served his mission in Bilbao, Spain, was one of the first graduates of BYU-Idaho and is a supervisor for Qwest. He is married to Nancy Burggraaff. They have five children and live in Grant, Idaho.



Brad, a foster son, served a mission to New York, lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, holds both a dental and medical degree, and is Chief of Surgery for the military bases in Fairbanks. They have four children.

I also love and appreciate Cheryl's seven sons and her daughter, Suzanne. Cheryl's handicapped son, George, passed away suddenly in 2001. Each of us lost our mothers in 2006. Having lost our fathers previously, it's been a nostalgic, saddening, but appreciative time for us. In these losses we have had imprinted in our souls something my mother taught me as a young child: "Life is precious and we need to appreciate, enjoy and develop every moment we have; time, talents, and relationships are a resource we don't want to waste." Cheryl's mother died of gallbladder cancer in June. She was diagnosed in March and was never able to return home. We took care of her in our home. We sold our home in Sugar and purchased Cheryl's mother's home in St. Anthony where we moved in September 2006. My mother died of Alzheimers in November. She had been in an Alzheimer care unit for several years. I was able to have a wonderful day with her shortly before her death and give her a final priesthood blessing.

When we moved into the ward, our Bishop, Chance Eckman, was one of my former cub scouts when Joyanne and I had lived in this same ward. My first calling was to work with the cub scouts! We never know the extent of our influence upon others. I am a pretty normal person. I have been involved in scouting continuously for the past 35 years. I have served in two Stake High Councils—at Sugar City for 5 years and at the college for another 5 years. While I was at the college, the stake put



John Derrill Bills



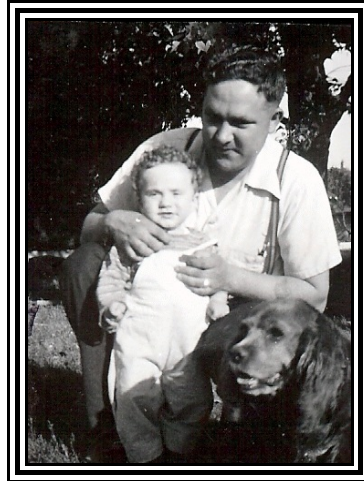
49 North 6<sup>th</sup> West in St. Anthony, ID

Cheryl to work also as a Relief Society advisor and subsequently as their stake family history specialist. So we got to spend some great time together working with young, bright, and enthusiastic youth of the church who didn't go to sleep like I do during sermons. In trying to reconcile in my own mind what I could offer in a stake calling, I concluded that maybe the Lord needed someone who could relate to those who are challenged, who struggle, who make errors, and who are pretty common, and don't have all the answers in life. I am reminded of the bumper sticker that says, "Be patient. The Lord isn't done with me yet."

## Pictorial History of John's Childhood



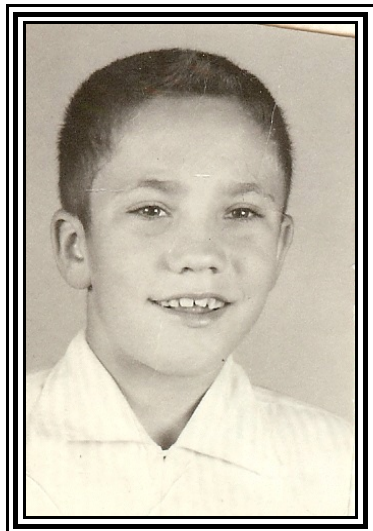
John as baby



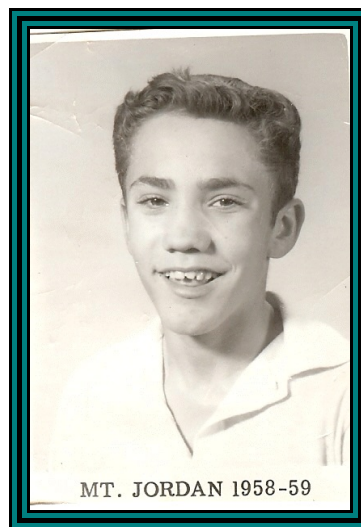
John and his Dad



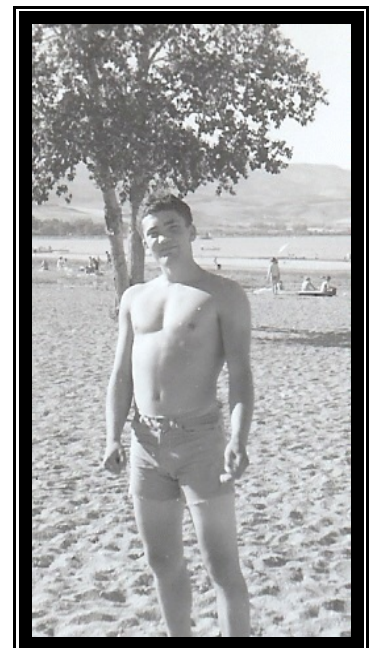
John in grade school



John as youngster



John in Junior High



Buff John back from Military

# **John's Childhood Memories**

by John D. Bills

## **Pan Lid Spinners**

Probably when I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we had one pan lid with a wooden thread spool on it for a handle. It made a great saucer in which to sit and spin on the kitchen floor. Sometimes we could have as many as three of us spinning on pan lids at the same time with us kids sitting on top of the lids. It was great sport! That is, until our mother discovered about the same time as we did that pan lids weighed down by children tend to develop big holes in the linoleum on the kitchen floor! Needless to say, my Mom was a bit concerned about all the holes popping up and we became really forgetful about our own involvement.

## **Laundry**

One impact my mother had in my life had to do with teaching me the value of work and industry. We had projects such as making lye soap for our laundering. We made the soap with a mixture of lye and beef tallow in huge 5-gallon vats which we then cut into blocks about the size of a brick. To use the soap, we grated off the amount needed with a knife or a vegetable grater.

I remember using the Scrub Board and an old ringer-washer. I remember running clothes through the ringer one day and getting my fingers too close to the ringer which pulled my arm between the rollers. Despite my screams, my arm continued through the rollers until they reached my arm pit at which time they continued to rotate—digging and tearing my shoulder and arm pit. By the time my mother was able to reach the emergency brake on the ringers, my upper arm was somewhat mangled. Miraculously no bones were broken and I developed a great respect for the washing machine. I wore a sling for a while and got doctored up by my Mom who was an experienced nurse by occupation.

## **Root Beer**

Another fun family project was making homemade root beer. We gathered old beer and whiskey bottles along the rail road tracks and ditch banks to put it in. We used a lot of sugar and Hires Root Beer extract, yeast and an old bottle-capper that was a family heirloom. Nothing tasted better than to come home on Sunday evenings after church and pour some homemade root beer on ice. Nothing proved more exciting either than to have that root beer age a little too much in our fruit room and to be awakened by the fireworks in the middle of the night as those bottles began to explode.

### **Shooting my First Pheasant:**

When I was about six years old, I got a cork gun for Christmas. As Dad and I were driving toward Draper that day, a couple pheasants landed in that patch of sagebrush next to the gas station. Dad stopped the car and helped me track those pheasants in the snow. I finally found one of those birds hunkered down in a clump of grass, with only its tail feathers showing. Dad encouraged me to shoot the pheasant, as he laughed with delight at what he knew would happen next. When I put my cork gun down next to the pheasant and pulled the trigger, the pheasant exploded into flight out of the grass, chortling in my face and nearly scared me to death! Wouldn't that have made a classic picture for the Saturday Evening Post?

### **Our Home Teacher:**

Our home teacher of many, many years was a seemingly old man by the name of Eldon Dorius. He was the father of two neighbor boys—one much older than I was and the other much younger. Those boys seemed to constantly be in trouble, but they always provided me with M-80s and cherry-bombs for an explosive 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They bought them by the gross and always saved plenty for me. We put 1 ½ inch firecrackers into every wormy apple we could find off our apple tree and hucked them high into the sky to explode in the air. The whole neighborhood would collect in my yard and around the old apple tree to participate in the nightly routine. Sometimes we would also get involved in a great game of kick the can around an old telephone pole on a nearby street corner.

Back to Eldon Dorius—our home teacher. He gave the most dry home-teaching lessons I have ever participated in during my whole life and mainly engaged in man-talk about nothing with my father. My brothers and sisters and I all listened patiently and politely, but we were real nervous and excited for the end of those lessons. In spite of the loss of that valuable time, I learned one important principle—commitment to duty regardless of our ability counts for a lot!

### **The Accordion:**

My sisters all played the piano. Kay stayed with it and became very accomplished. My parents said I was going to take lessons and play the accordion. I took lessons from about age 12 to 15. I took from two different teachers over the years. My first instructor had several other students and she put together an accordion band that performed and made a little money. She took us on a trip to Disneyland with the receipts from our big program. She was a cool gal. Both of my teachers were really sharp gals—probably in their late 30s to mid 40s. My first teacher, Dawn Carlson, died of cancer or something. They both gave private lessons but Dawn Carlson had a studio. My 2<sup>nd</sup> teacher was Mrs. Brown. Both were attractive gals. I was just a Jr. High school and early high school student. They were competent teachers who generated my respect and admiration. Jeff also played the accordion, but by that time, I was gone from home.

## **Church:**

When I was a kid we had our church meetings at different times than we do now. Priesthood was at 8 a.m, Sunday School was about 10 a.m. and then Sacrament Meeting would be in the evening about 5 p.m. Primary was on Wednesday afternoons right after school.

We met in a really old building made of brick. It had a rock ledge about 4 inches wide that went clear around the church about 10 - 12 feet above ground. We liked to hurry over there early before Primary and walk around the ledge pressing our body against the bricks to keep from falling off. Sometimes our ledge walking made us late for Primary.

## **Pet Pigeons:**

The attic in the church had a lot of pigeons in it. Sometimes the janitor would leave the door open and we'd sneak up to the rafters with our gunny sacks and flashlights. We would shine the flash light in the pigeon's eyes which would momentarily paralyze them. We'd then sneak up and grab them and put them into our gunny sacks. I would take the pigeons home to my pigeon pens where I raised lots of pigeons. They got so they would come back home if we would let them out of their cages. After I left home, Jeff and Shauna took over raising the pigeons.

A friend of Dad's raised fancy pigeons called fan-tail pigeons, king pigeons, and homing pigeons. The homing pigeons were specially bred to find their home from 25-50 miles away. During the war, pigeons were used to deliver messages. He also had tumbling pigeons that would fly along, do somersaults and tumble almost hitting the ground, but would stop just before they hit, right themselves and fly off. This friend gave us some of these special pigeons to add to our collection.

It was so cool when we'd have baby pigeons. I liked to watch the pigeons lay eggs, sit on them, and then watch the eggs hatch.

We also had a few rabbits. We'd eat them and sell some at Easter time. They tasted a lot like chicken. When I was dating Joyanne, I took a live rabbit to her home as an Easter surprise. She and Susan awoke to find it hopping around their room.

## **FFA President** (Future Farmers of America):

I raised a calf for an FFA project even though I wasn't a farmer. I went to a couple classes with a friend that were farm-related. I joined their club and they made me president. I'd never farmed in my life, but had to raise an animal for a project. We rented a barn and corral from a neighbor and fed the calf sugar beet pulp, hay, and grain. I named him Old Joe and he was ornery as heck—really mean—and grew to weigh over 1100 pounds. When it was time to sell him, my parents said, "Let's buy him ourselves....we can never recover the cost of raising this steer so we might as well eat him." We kept it a secret from my sisters as we knew they wouldn't like it. One day as we were enjoying some extra wonderful meat, someone said something about Old Joe and my sisters started crying because they realized we were eating Old Joe.



## **Vacations:**

For a vacation one time, our family went to Bear Lake and stayed in a cabin for three days. We liked to swim out to this raft, but on the way back to the shore, there were a lot of horseflies and if you came up out of the water, they'd get you, so you had to swim under water.

## **An Earthquake:**

On Aug 17, 1959, Hebgon Lake Earthquake in Montana hit. I was in high school in a really old building. It shook so bad that it was felt at my school in Sandy, Utah. We got under our desks at first then the whole school was evacuated and we went out onto the football field. The earthquake caused a whole mountain to slide down into a canyon and covered up all the campers, etc. Lots of people got killed up there. Some of our neighbors from Sandy were camping there at the time. The mountain just covered them up. I believe there were seventeen people killed in that campground.

## **The Dentist:**

We all went to the dentist the same day. We had a dentist in Murray and we took turns going in. I always liked to be last cause I was scared to death. It always hurt when they used the drill. It felt like a hammer and chisel being used on my teeth.

## **Mink Bite:**

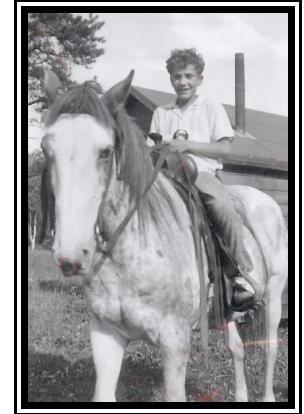
While I was in high school I got a job working for a fellow who raised mink out in the country south west of Jordan High School. I fed and watered the mink and cleaned their pens intermittently. One day, in the process, a mink bit me on the back of my left hand. Before long I noted the area around the bite was turning red and beginning to swell and then noted a red line beginning to progress slowly up my left arm. Recognizing the condition as blood pinioning, I determined to get home as quickly as possible without running and significantly raising my heart rate. The mink rancher wasn't at home and I had no vehicle, so I sat out at a brisk walk along the canal bank which would lead me to my home – about two miles away. I was really frightened, but determined to keep my heart rate at a relaxed pace. Upon arrival at home, I was glad to find my Mom there available to me. She immediately popped me into a tub of ice water to slow circulation of blood and pumped me full of penicillin. I've always been fortunate to have a Mom who was a nurse and had plenty of medicine on hand. By the time my Mom had a chance to intervene, my arm was swollen and my arm pit so enlarged I couldn't even lower my arm. I really feel fortunate to be alive and to have had quick and appropriate response to a life-threatening situation.

## **The Canal:**

A block west of our home in Sandy, Utah lay an undeveloped, largely un-peopled, and sparsely vegetated recreation area we boys aptly christened, "The Canal." It included a 3 sectioned horse corral where the railroad deposited horses bound for a local mink food company. We learned a lot about horse riding, bronc busting, and horse herding from the many horses left too long in the corrals. On one occasion we even got to help our fathers and law enforcement officers round up a herd of horses that had mysteriously escaped from the corrals.

Then there were the hills and fox holes, sandwiched between the railroad tracks and the canal, where we staged both dirt clod and BB gun wars. Those wars were short-lived because of the pain and injuries we saw they caused.

There were the railroad tracks to be followed south to the high school, or north to town. We flattened a lot of pennies and nails on the railroad tracks, and got a lot of good advice from railroad men passing through about not hitching rides on the railroad cars, which were commonly deposited on the railroad siding. Those railroad cars were exciting to explore, to climb, and to think about hitching to far off places.



Finally there was the canal, with it's chalky water from Utah Lake. It was so muddy that we always went home from swimming covered with a fine film of silt. Sometimes we evacuated our swimming hole prematurely, to make way for a floating dead sheep or cow tossed irreverently as waste into the canal by an upstream farmer. It was here I sometimes swam naked in the canal with the other guys. We once had our clothing stolen by the neighbor girls who had been secretly spying on us. Despite our pleas and threats, we had to crawl in our birthday suits up the ditch line leading past my home, and streak across 2<sup>nd</sup> East and into the back door leading to my basement bedroom before we could dress. From that day on we wore cutoffs when swimming in the canal.

It was in the Canal we hid under water, breathing through reeds, when a law enforcement officer came searching for us, following reports by a neighbour we had blown up his newspaper box with a cherry bomb or —80. In fact, we had only been using the mailbox as a cannon from which to launch tin cans.

It was in this canal we launched our homemade raft sealed with tar melted from Styrofoam salvaged from discarded cemetery decorations. Though the raft could not support our combined weight, it kept our heads curiously visible above the water's surface all the way to Sandy's Main Street. There the water came clear up to the bottom of the bridge, and stopped us cold.

It was here we headed up and down the canal each Fall as the canal water was shut off, in search of stranded carp and cat fish. One incredible year I captured an 8 lb. carp beneath the railroad trestle right by the corral, and also a beautiful 1-1/2 lb silvery channel cat fish.

It was just upstream across 90<sup>th</sup> South in the sagebrush where we captured garter snakes and lizards: blue bellies, green bellies, and orange bellies, and toads, and where we even saw some giant incredible toads. Our fathers came and dug with us for the giant toads, but we could never catch them. My personal terrariums always included lots of snakes and lizards, but never any giant toads.

In the winter, we sledded down 90<sup>th</sup> South from the tracks clear to State Street, and tested our mettle on the steep hills of the “old slag dump” on the south side of the road. The black slag granules in a scar on my elbow attest to the carefree and adventurous spirit of trying to ski off a rocky precipice there.

It was the elderly widow, Effie Ferguson, who lived in the two-room shack on the heavily wooded one-acre lot just South of the Canal, who hired me, beginning at age 12, to weed, paint, prune trees, chop wood, and do general maintenance for her. Pay always came in the form of “whatever change she had available at the time.” Working for Effie kindled my entrepreneurial spirit and love of hard work that followed me through life. From then on, I always had at least a part time job.

Effie took a special interest in me. Sometimes she bought my carp fresh-caught out of the Jordan River. She was always quick to remind me that back East, carp was considered a real delicacy. Often she made punch for me during rest breaks, and told me stories of her childhood. She reminisced about accidentally chopping off her toe, and burying it in a matchbox in the fruit cellar. I didn’t search the root cellar for the match box, but I did notice on a shelf down there, her ouiji board that had fascinated her as a youth, although she advised me against playing with it, “because it did draw upon the power of Satan, and might become a means of allowing Him to influence me.”

Adjoining Effie’s yard on the west, and the canal on the south was a flat weed field owned by the Utleys, parents of my two good friends, Richard and Russell. With help of our fathers, we filled in a few potholes, and turned that weed patch into a neighbourhood ball field. Here I hit the ball, unknowingly threw my bat, and gave Richard a black eye. Here Russell also accidentally threw his bat and broke my nose. We learned to play ball as neophytes-through trial and error- and definitely without the benefits of little league training.

Today the Canal, the corrals, Effie’s yard, and the ball field are occupied by the Sandy station of TRAX-the light rail system. Though asphalt covers my 50-year-old playground, the memories and habits, and character built remain-a reminder of childhood, family, friendships, and “who I be.”

## **Family Memories**

## My Mother:

Frances Jeanette Tennant  
b. 27 Sep 1917  
d. 7 Nov 2006

The mistakes of youth were lost in the wonderful memories of doing dishes together while listening to our morning radio advertisements and programs and having plenty to discuss with our brothers and sisters. We all took turns doing the day's dishes with each other or with our Mom. Some of my most cherished memories are of singing songs and talking with my Mom as I took my turn at dishes. Mom was a wonderful storyteller and always told us fairy tales as we dried dishes.

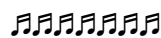
We had family prayer at night, but occasionally we would just go in the bedroom with our Mom when we were younger and say our prayers in twos or threes.

My Mom always made us sack lunches, and I always felt a little bit left out when so many of my friends got to have a hot-lunch tray! It took a few more school years beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> grade before I would realize that having a lunch made by Mom was pretty special and that I always had more time on the playground than those kids who had to wait in the hot lunch line. But—with cold lunches, you have to ALWAYS remember to bring home your paper sack. Economy was always an issue in a large family.

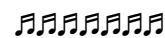


We bottled fruit and vegetables which we often picked ourselves.

We grew up with a radio before the inception of television in our neighborhood. Early arrivals at breakfast entitled us to hear morning programs of Captain Midnight and our favorite radio advertisement—the Cream of Wheat Song:

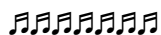


*Cream of Wheat is so good to eat  
We have it every day  
Cream of Wheat is so good to eat—  
It makes us shout “hooray!”*



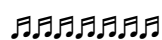
*Its good for growing children  
And grownups—too, -- to eat—  
So for all the family's breakfast  
You can't beat Cream of Wheat!*

We sang along with the radio and ate our Cream of Wheat and Oatmeal! A couple of other favorite songs we sang in the mornings and at the kitchen sink in the evenings included:



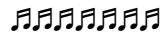
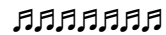
Does eat oats and  
Mares eat oats and  
Little lambs eat ivy  
A kid'll eat ivy, too,

Wouldn't you?



And  
Doe- A Deer- A female  
deer  
Ray- A drop of golden sun

Me-A name I call myself  
 Fa-A long, long way to run  
 So- A needle pulling thread  
 La-A note that follows So  
 Te- A drink with jam and  
 Bread  
 That brings us back to  
 Doe-Doe-Doe-Doe  
 (repeat going up the scale)

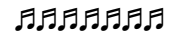


### “Hypos”

You’ll never know the  
 anguish and fear we  
 suffered as  
 children...knowing that our  
 mother had “hypo needles”  
 and half-dead bugs to poke  
 into us for every occasion.

About every morning I  
 would peek into the  
 saucepan to see what kind  
 of mush was for breakfast;  
 instead there sometimes was  
 a big “3-inch” needle  
 bubbling joyfully around in  
 its favorite environment!

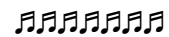
Hypo needles were also  
 great for digging ticks and  
 slivers out and things like  
 that.



Bill Grogen’s goat  
 Was feeling fine  
 Ate two red shirts  
 Down off the line

Bill took a stick  
 Gave him a whack  
 And tied him to the  
 Rail-road track!  
 The whistle blew  
 The train was nigh

Bill Grogen’s goat  
 Was doomed to die.  
 He gave three groans  
 Of awful pain,  
 Coughed up those shirts  
 And flagged the train!



My Mom, the Nurse!

We also  
 sang with  
 echo  
 singers:



John with his parents

My Mom was a Relief Society President for many years and she was also the neighborhood nurse so her daily routine always involved making the neighborhood rounds to administer shots, medications, to change dressings, and to check on the social and spiritual welfare of our elderly neighbors and others with incapacity and health problems. My Mom seldom took a car and found she could cover the neighborhood more quickly RUNNING between homes. I don't believe I ever saw her WALKING any where. She used to talk about going out to the track field after a day in high school to race the members of the track team. I have no reason to doubt her! Many times, I used to clip right along with her on some of her home visits.



Frances and her parents Clara Harris and John Maneely Tennant

Maybe I inherited my penchant for running from my Mom. You see, as a 3-year old I'd gotten into a terrible habit of streaking! My neighbors were quite chagrined about my habit and advised my Mother she needed to take corrective action. Each day I'd hit the front door at full speed—headed for places unknown with my mother in hot pursuit of her naked son! How I relished those competitions with my mother even though the cost of losing was oh, so painful!!! I think I got pretty fast in a real hurry!

### More About Frances Tennant Bills

Patriarchal Blessing: No. 36 Mount Jordan Stake July 31 1955; Sandy Utah  
given by Patriarch William D. Kuhre upon the head of Frances Jeanette Bills, daughter of John McNealy (Maneely) Tennant and Clara Bell Harris. Frances was born September 27, 1917 at Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah.

*"My dear Sister: Speaking in the authority of the Patriarchal Office in the church of Jesus Christ, this blessing be upon they head with a sincere desire and prayer that the Lord will add thereto the Divine sanction. The Divine approval in all our works should be sought for in our lives day by day.*

Frances was 35 years old and had 5 children at the time of this blessing.

At this time, she was serving as ward Relief Society President and a Den Mother in Cub Scouts

Her husband received his Patriarchal Blessing on the same day just prior to Frances.

*There is within us, and will be with thee, and about thee, a spirit, an influence, a power of direction unseen to mortal eyes but still a power for good in directing thy life. I cannot say that to every person that such an influence is given, but I do feel there are certain ones who have spirits susceptible to the Divine impulses that are so blessed. Thou art one of them. If thou wilt learn to give heed to the Divine Spirit, feeling, impulses that come to thee from time to time when questions of great importance require a decision and action, it will be well for thee. Be patient; be not too hasty, for the Lord has means and ways of teaching thee that may be hard at the time, but eventually the higher wisdom will be manifest, and thou shalt understand more fully the*

*purposes of the Lord in allowing thee to pass through certain tests for thy faithfulness and for thy integrity.*

*Embrace the doors of opportunity when they are open to thee for service in the Church of Christ. Such times will be a blessing unto thee. The light of inspiration will come to thee even though thou dost feel incompetent in and of thyself to do and accept the duties required. The Lord has means of teaching, influencing, and directing the action and courses of His children in their duties throughout mortality in a proper and righteous course under the Divine influence for the fulfillment of every duty and responsibility given to them. Therefore, the Lord bless thee in all thy work.*

*May the blessings of health and strength, physical, spiritual, mental be given thee. I feel it to be important in thy life and that thy life may be in harmonious balance. Therefore, be careful, be prudent, be wise, be mindful of the Word of Wisdom. It is the key to health and strength.*

*Thou art of the House of Israel, through the ancient Patriarchs, through the Covenant Race. God has a right, and He did so, to make a covenant that a certain line of people should be the special recipient of His watch-care and blessing for the benefit and blessing of all His children upon His footstool, this earth. Thou art, therefore, of the Ephraim Nation. Rebellious though that race may have been, yet guarded and controlled by the Divine Power it has been a good influence and a strength and blessing for the peoples of the earth through which that seed has been scattered.*

*I feel to seal thee up unto the Day of Redemption which is the time when all His children, the children of God, shall make an accounting for the deeds done in the body. Until that time thou art going through this period of training to prepare thee, give thee the knowledge, the experience, the mental and physical attitude that will enable thee to receive and be worthy of the blessings in store for those who are faithful. Keep the faith; be not dismayed by obstacles in the way, neither ridicule nor violent opposition. All these will give thee experience as they did the Prophet Joseph. I bless thee with the spirit of helpfulness that thou may be a worthy helpmate to thy husband, a power for good to thy family to direct them in the ways of righteousness, and to hold them in the faith with the teaching and example that will carry them through the days of temptation that may lie before them, and give thee the faith in the Lord that thou dost need to carry on thy work. The Lord blesses thee in all that thou dost do that thy life's work maybe successful and thou be worthy of the greatest blessing in the Celestial Kingdom.*

*So be it unto thee, dependant upon thy faithfulness, and spoken in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, even so, Amen.*

## **Taken from Missionary Resume as filled out by Frances**

*Employment experience: Sept 15, 1981 to Oct 30, 1982: part-time Nurse supervisor--Lenore's Nursing Home. complete care of 45 patients on afternoon shift; medication; supervise aids.*  
*1970-1971: 1 year, 8 months on maternity at St. Mark's hospital; delivery and ward care. Full-time.*  
*1938-Feb 1940: One and one-half years full-time duty at Heber City, Utah hospital.*  
*Education:*  
*High school; pre-nurse course: chemistry, geometry, anatomy, and psychology.*  
*Three-year diploma course at LDS Hospital; 1 year study at University of Utah for required classes; balance taught at the hospital. Students required to work 40 hours a week practical training for 3 years to graduate.*  
*One 20-hour course; Home nursing taught by American Red Cross.*  
*Registered Nurse. State of Utah licence; lapsed Dec 31, 1985 for lack of adequate hours worked during the year.*

*Special skills, abilities, hobbies and interests:*  
*No language skills; do neighborhood nursing, including medicine injections. Sing with the Ward choir for at least 35 years; enjoy conducting Primary music; enjoy all Temple work, teaching and contact with people. Hobby--genealogy compilation and writing histories. Gardening.*  
*Interests: general welfare of all people, including our 7 children and their families.*

*Church positions:*  
*Stake Primary Secretary 6/1941-12/1943 (2 ½ years)*  
*Stake Primary Councilor 3/1948-10/1949 (1 ½ years)*  
*Sunday School teacher 10/1949-9/1953 (4 years)*  
*Ward Activity Councilor 9/1953-1955 (1 ½ years)*  
*Ward Relief Society President 2/1955-8/1957 (2 years)*  
*Den Mother 1955-1969 (6 years)*  
*Ward Primary chorister 8/1959-5/1965 (5 yr; 9 mo)*  
*Primary President 8/1974-8/1975 (1 year)*  
*Sunday School teacher 9/1975-10/1978 (3 years)*  
*Ward Relief Society councilor 10/1978 - 2/1980 (1 ½ years)*  
*Singles ward representative 1983-present*  
*Senior Sisters Family Home Evening Teacher*

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First date with Derrill Bills: 31 Oct 1933 at a Halloween Dance.  
Engaged 3 Sep 1937  
Married: 19 Mar 1940 at Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona; Sealed 9 Apr 1940 Salt Lake Temple by Joseph Christenson.  
First home: 1120 Monroe St. N.W. Washington, D.C.  
Second: 279 East, 600 South, Sandy, Utah



**Following is some correspondence between Patti and the daughter of Frances' best friend for many years. It gives some unique insight into Frances' younger years.**

I'm glad Laurel wrote about Ruth Donaldson's passing. It brought a flood of memories about Mom. I remember being amazed as a child that my mother had a best friend. I thought she was much too old for that. When Mom spent time visiting with Ruth, she was instantly younger. At least it seemed that way to me. I think it reminded her of her nursing school days. Anyway, Ruth was an amazing, thoughtful friend to Mom. —Patti

Dear Patti,

Hi. I'm not sure you'll remember my name - Sheila Peterson, Ruth Donaldson's daughter.

While I was going through some of my Mom's stuff I found a letter that was addressed to your Mom. I don't believe that my Mom ever sent it to your Mom, otherwise I wouldn't have found it, but I think that you might want to have a copy. It was such a surprise to me because of all the tantalizing, fascinating things it talked about: both about your mom and mine, things about which I had no idea. For some time, before Mom died, my sisters and I had tried to get her to record for us information about her early life, as a child, as a teenager, while she was in nursing school, but nothing that she talked about gave us as much amazing information about her life did as this letter. I have no idea when she actually wrote it as there was no date on it. That's what I'm trying to figure out - when it was written. It must have been written after she divorced my Dad, but before your Dad died. Can you tell me when he died? I'm just trying to put her life into some kind of perspective for us.

I know that you are going to love this letter. It is sweet, loving, tender, and so insightful. You will be fascinated.

Thanks, Sheila

*Dearest Frannie,*

*Remembering back thru all the years we have known each other reminds me of Charles Dickens "It was the worst of all times and the best of all times."*

*Possibly the memories that are so vivid to me you may have long forgotten, but perhaps in recalling them you may know once more the carefree happiness and, yes, even some despair of those years long past.*

*Do you remember:*

*When we checked in at the nurse's home and fussy little Mrs. Battan (?) briefed us on the do's and don't's of our new home in the little room top floor on the southwest wing?*

*We could hardly wait to graduate from our stripped crab-blue dresses to the full skirted uniforms with white bibs and aprons only to have a new style - plain straight white uniform when that day finally arrived?*

*The morning at Devotional when I was called on to pray and stood mute and absolutely petrified and you calmly proceeded to offer the prayer and no one even realized that it was you, not me?*

*The long hard hours we worked with the fear of dismissal always hanging over our heads like a sword of Damocles?*

*The days we walked up to the U. (University of Utah) to afternoon classes and home again - absolutely famished - even cafeteria food was delicious.*

*You getting scarlet fever and all our class sent home early for Christmas vacation - just as if you had done something very naughty and we were all being punished!*

*The nice boys you introduced me to - how happy Turn and I were for awhile and what fun we had dating together and separately with other boys?*

*The day I was called off duty to the nurse's home and my Aunt and Uncle told me my brother Jack had died. - scarlet fever and pneumonia and only my youngest brother to comfort him. We went out with Turn and Ray after the funeral - Did my relatives think it heartless of me - somehow I felt deserted and that I was the only one who truly mourned for him.*

*The beautiful summer nights when we slept out on the screened porch at our cottage - how many cots in a row!!*

*The night Sally wrestled someone's date to the floor (was it yours?) in the front room of the nursing home. Horror of horrors and where was Mrs. Duke?*

*Also the evening she dumped me in a bath tub full of water and me fully clothed and the house mother scolding you for all the commotion.*

*The psychology class directly after lunch in the sunroom on the top floor of the hospital and everyone trying desperately to stay awake. I got my lowest grade in that class.*

*Finally, graduation night, new uniforms, a stripe on our caps and a bouquet of roses. No one from my family came. I felt so badly I don't even remember but surely your family was there. I went with Allan afterward - where I no longer remember.*

*Then I was married and you went to Heber to work and we slowly drifted apart. Strange that as close as we were I don't believe we ever wrote to each other.*

*The Buzz came home and you were married - remember the reception at the old Jensen home?*

*Several of us were at your little house for a party (I believe before Kay was born) and were fooling around with table tipping.*

*I will never forget you and Buzz taking my children and me into your home for a week after Laurie's birth when I was so depressed life itself seemed useless. How did you manage I wonder?*

*Again when I left Allan and came home from California you and Buzz gave of your comfort and strength and helped me start over.*

*I think of you often and wonder why we never made more effort to talk to each other or visit together (both of us so caught up in our family and work, I suppose) but somehow I always feel close to you and when we do meet it is as if no time has passed and we are the same young carefree girls of the long ago golden days.*

### **Patti Wrote in May 2002:**

My class of 7- 8 year olds did a Sharing Time presentation and all the kids told a story about a grandparent or ancestor. They were so cute! We had a fun and crazy practice and party at my house and I'm lucky to still have a house. But the thing that really got me excited was a fun trip Clare and Mom and I took to Beaver, Utah a few days ago. Mom has three cousins living there and they showed us the best time! They are the cutest ladies. They invited Mom down and showed us all around the town. We made several stops, and each place had a story. I felt so badly that I didn't bring a tape recorder. We saw Mom's mother's home where she grew up. We saw what was left of the old Murdoch Academy, where her mother went to school to become a teacher. We went to the cemetery and saw our great-grandparent's graves. We saw the opera house where Mother used to go to plays when she visited as a teenager and the place where she would go for milkshakes. They said she was very popular with the boys and they would all visit under the street light and the boys would try to impress her as they threw rocks at the street light.

They had a ton of fun stories, especially about their father-- our great uncle. There were Indian stories, and one about our uncle as a boy getting trapped in an old jail cell that once held John D. Lee, the guy who was responsible for the Mountain Meadow massacre. They told us about a lady who the kids all claimed was a witch and was teased mercilessly. Finally she told them she could make the water in the ditch run red, then blue, and then green. And if she could do that, she could turn them into a toad, if they didn't leave her alone. Sure enough, the next day it was red, then blue and then green. The children were so frightened they never bothered her again. They didn't realize the ditch ran right past the woolen mills and those were the dyes they were using each day.

Mom's cousins showed us where the ditch that ran past our grandmothers house and the woolen mill used to be. Our great-grandfather was badly burned and died. He left his savings buried somewhere, and it was quite a treasure hunt for some time. Finally a strange little English lady appeared in town and told Great-grandmother Harris she would find the money buried in a special place in the cellar. She found the spot and there was an empty box. The mysterious woman was never seen again, and the money was never found, but a cousin opened a big general store not too long after that. The Harris's always suspected "the Toltons" of taking the money. Even today, the three cousins said "We really don't associate much with that part of the family." They don't even sit on the same row in church. Mom treated everyone to lunch after the tour. It was such fun day and if you are ever down that way, any of the ladies would love you to stop by. Thanks again for keeping in touch.

### **Report of a visit to Frances by daughter-in-law, Cheryl Bills, in June 2004**

Dear Family,

I just have to let you know what a DELIGHTFUL visit I had with Mom last night. My mother and I went to Salt Lake to get Kellie and her two brothers on the plane to go visit their dad in Pennsylvania (Kellie will be living with him from now on.). Anyway, his military orders came through and he got Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, so in July they will be coming out to stay!!! Last night Mother and I went to Atria about 6:45 and Mom was just finishing up her dessert. When I walked into the dining room, there she sat with her straw hat on eating and visiting with another lady (Nona Smith). [On a previous visit, Mom had told me that one of the ladies usually wore a hat everywhere she went and thought she was a little snooty!] Mom looked DARLING!!!!

She was so enjoying her dessert--was nearly the last person in the dining room and she told me that Nona was a "bit forgetful" and that she had to take her to her apartment before she could visit. So, off we went to find her apartment. Mom stopped to hug a very handsome gentleman and introduce us. She was so proud of us!

Nona's apartment was on the 3rd floor, but Nona didn't know her room number (and I didn't realize it was on her wrist band) and your MOM was in CHARGE of finding that apartment. She took Nona by the hand--Nona said she was new and was so scared. Mom said, patting her shoulder, "I know. I was new once, too." We tried a couple halls and didn't find the right room. Nona was sure it was 331---then 329--Mom just said, well, if that is your room, we will get you in!!!! And she went up to the door and knocked....and told the person in the room that it was Nona's room.....but that person knew about the room number being on the wrist band. Meanwhile, I had found the correct room (319), and went to get them headed in the right direction! When we got her to the door, Nona was thrilled to find her place. She told me again how scared she was. Mom went to help her unlock the door and Nona said, 'Oh, I don't lock my door. I don't have anything anyone would want." Mom put her arm around Nona and said, "Well, you better get something, even if it is just a hanky!"

Mom seemed 20 years younger as she was helping Nona--spry, full of pep and energy and just the perfect care-giver!!! You would have been SO proud of her. Then as we were walking back to Mom's room, we passed Vaun's room and she said, "The man that lives there put the sweetest note on my door----and then he went and took up with a School Teacher!!!!!"

Mom was thrilled to show us her room and the wonderful new love seat. She was really thrilled with it. Had us try it out, then wanted to show us how the TV works. She did perfect with it. By then it was time for "Karoke" in the multi-purpose room and I asked Mom if she wanted to go and she started swaying and dancing and said, "You Bet!" And we went. We were a few minutes late, so sat towards the back of the room. When she entered, everyone was saying "Hi Frances! Here's Frances!, etc." We hadn't been singing long before the lady in charge said, "Frances! We need you to come sing for us!" UP she JUMPED and hurried to the front of the room---straw hat and all. As I said before, she looked DARLING!!!!!!

The emcee said Frances had gone with them on an outing today and had been the life of the party and here she was still going strong! She was given the microphone to sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and they had the mike facing the words on a big screen. But FRANCES wanted to



face the audience and she did! She sang with expression and total commitment (as the others sang along with her.) Everyone clapped and let her know she did a great job. She came back to her seat and leaned over to me and said, "I didn't know I was on the program, did you? Was I off key? Did my voice crack? Did you KNOW I was going to be on the program? Is that why you came?" It was one of those precious moments. I assured her that she sang so beautifully and on key and that her voice did not crack. I even told her that she did so well I bet they would call on her to sing again sometime! As the singing progressed, the residents were eager for a turn at the microphones. It was so fun!!!! Some really great voices, too!

Toward the end of the evening, the emcee asked for Frances to come up and sing once more!!!! (I leaned over and said, "See, I told you that you were good!") She just beamed and made her way up front almost crawling over a couple men in wheel chairs! This time, she sang a duet, "You Are My Sunshine!" They took some pictures of her, so those of you who are often at Atria, ask about those pictures and see how adorable Mom was! She said, "I did pretty good, didn't I?"

And at the very end, I went forward and did my Maggie and Jiggs reading for them--which is a hoot and I'll have to do it for you all sometime if You are interested! Everyone laughed and laughed at the end of it. Fun! Mom told me, "I was so proud of you!" And I felt like a little girl getting her mommy's praise!!!!

Then, Mom wanted to go for a walk....Let me tell you, she was like the Ever-ready bunny!!!!!! She walked us to the car and I told her to move off the parking lot and so she got up on the grass and stood there waving with all her soul. "I'm so glad you came! I didn't know I was going to be on the program!" I asked her to tell Shauna hi when she came tomorrow and she said, "Shauna usually comes every Tuesday, but this week it will be on Wednesday!" She really was a charmer and you would have loved it. She reminded me of a school girl who had just had a standing ovation! Everyone loves Frances! And she eats it up!!!!

It was truly a delightful visit! I want you to know that I dearly love your mom. She wanted to know where John was and I told her he stayed home to take care of the fish in the river. She said she wasn't at all surprised---and that she guessed she knew where she stood!!!! Thanks so much for letting me be part of your family! Love, Cheryl

### **Karren went on a trip with Frances to Durango, Colorado in Sep 2004. This is her report:**

Trip to Durango, Colorado with Karren in Sep 2004:

Mom apparently reported to Kay that the trip was stressful. I just didn't find time yesterday to report to you. The only thing that was stressful is that she thought she had brought 2 coin purses but she didn't. She worried a lot about her 2nd coin purse. She put her fannie- pack in her suitcase and then we couldn't find it as we got on the bus. I rushed up and searched our hotel room, but it was not there so I told her it must be in the suitcase and it was. Now for the full report:

We got off to a slow start...the bus had a flat tire in the parking lot before we ever got on. It just put us behind schedule 1 hour traveling. Going down everyone took the microphone and introduced themselves. Mom said she worked at the front desk at Atria. We had a binder with our names on the outside and a list of all fellow travelers. Also word search games and math games. Prizes were given for them the next day. We had lunch at City Café in Moab (voted best restaurant in Southern Utah for about 5 out of the last 6 years. It was marvelous!!!! The portions were huge!!! We saw beautiful autumn leaves but couldn't stop to photograph them because we were behind schedule. Then we passed thru Arches national park. It was so pretty. We heard lots of jokes and they put on Harry Potter which we could view from various TV's suspended from the ceiling. I thought Mom liked it. We were never bored. There was a restroom at the back of the bus.

The time flew! We got out and went to restrooms in Helper. Like airlines, the staff went down the aisle and gave out icy pop or water or juice. We also got half a muffin (or more...they were big) and they passed out red licorice.

We got to Durango to a nice hotel and left our suitcases in our room. Then bussed to a buffet dinner in a nearby restaurant.. Most people were still stuffed from lunch but we ate anyway. I think I gained 5 pounds on this trip! Next morning our hotel had both a hot and cold breakfast. Then we rode our bus downtown where we caught the Durango-Silverton train. It runs along a river- and the scenery was beautiful. We were in an authentic old coach car. We couldn't take pictures out of the windows though- the windows didn't open enough. Mom didn't seem to be tired but when her hip hurt I gave her some ibuprofen and she felt better.

At Silverton ( much like Park City before it got commercialized) we walked around and then had a buffet dinner at the Grand Imperial Hotel with cool parlor lights , wallpaper and tin ceilings. I got lots of pictures. I am going to make mom a scrapbook of the photos this weekend. They are already developed. I just can't pick them up before the Hawaiian party tonite at Atria. (I don't know how to spell Luau.) I got a CD of the photos though so I can e-mail them to you all. The trip back to Durango was by bus on the highway way up on the mountain tops. The peaks around there are 11,000 to 14,000. Wow, the views were breathtaking. Back in Durango mom couldn't recognize the train station we were at that morning. We ate dinner at a buffet steak house next to our hotel so we walked to it. Some of the lovely people we traveled with went to a melodrama that night. (Not included in the tour).

Mom was always anxious to pay for dinner and everything.. I kept explaining that meals, tickets, hotels, taxes and tips were included in the tour. I learned that she rarely watches tv because she hates the commercials.

I faithfully put her hearing aids in and she laughed at the jokes on the bus. We stayed both nights at the same hotel in Durango and we lunched the 3rd day at City Café again in Moab. We played Bingo on the less scenic section... Mom didn't know how to play Bingo but she caught on fast. Personally I truly had a wonderful time. It was fun fun fun. The people were so nice to mom and said she was so cute and asked her questions and tried to visit as we shared a table for meals. Truly it

was relaxing and the people wonderful. James (Jimmy) Hofeling, who works for Jordan Credit

union and was a boy at dad's feet in the neighborhood hugged her lots. Mom and another fellow were the oldest present at age 87.

I took her wheelchair but she never needed it. Losing her memory brought her unhappiness every now and then. She asked if we were in Idaho. She had a good handle on time and day of week, but not on where she was. If she didn't enjoy a part of the trip...it could only be from being frustrated at not being able to remember things or places. She did take her pills in her pill minder. She is obsessed with counting her money. She doesn't like ones. She counted her money over and over. She suspects people of stealing her money. Yesterday I bought her a money box with a key. The key can go on her arm with her house key. I will give it to her tonight. If she gives any one money, please leave a piece of paper in her money box with your name and how much. She forgets where she spent it or who she gave it to.

I am sorry if she mom thought it was stressful...but if it was then it had to be that she couldn't find her purse or pills....even if they were right there in plain sight next to her suitcase. The vacation was great though. I have never had such a nice time. I kept reassuring her that everything does change- but not our love for her. Her prayers are the sweetest I have ever heard. She is appreciative and kind. I think we can just keep telling her that we still love her. She is not happy with her trembling or memory loss. Well, my lunch is way past. Talk with you later. Love you all, Karren

### **Talk given by Patti at funeral of her mother:**

Life Sketch of Mother, Frances T. Bills given Nov. 11, 2006

Our mother, Frances, was born to a coal mining father and a mother who was a teacher. Perhaps that is where she developed her love of hard work and her passion for learning. The first five years her family lived in coal camps in Helper, Bingham, Sunnyside and Haines. Her brother John was born when she was 4. The family then bought a farm in Butlerville and her father began to raise chickens. Two years later they moved to Sandy.

In her personal history she writes, *"I attended Sunday school with my brother, and Primary part time. My father, although not a member, insisted that we go or else not play on Sunday. My mother did not ever attend any meetings, but encouraged us. My mother had tutored me my first year at home in Butlerville in both school and play. We had such lovely walks over the hills. I remember wild flowers of early spring- the meadow lark after a rain, and the chicken hawks after the chickens."*

Our mother had a great appreciation for nature. She loved flowers, especially her roses. In these last few years our sweet sister Shauna made sure Mom had fresh flowers, when she visited each week.

Her history continues, *"In Sandy I was put into the first grade for two weeks and then advanced to the second through my dear mother's effort. I loved school. The walk to school, the smell of chalk, floor cleaning compound and paper. The teachers were all special and learning a challenge."*

Education was important to Mom. She encouraged her children in school, and she and Dad made great sacrifices to ensure that all their children had the opportunity for college or other career interests.

When Frances was 10 ½ her mother contracted blood poisoning and died. She wrote, *“Having been so loved and spoiled, I found myself much alone and life very hard.”* Her father remarried a young widow, Dora Mae Shelton Gause, who had a young son, Albert. Mom loved her brother Bert, and we have lots of fun family memories of Thanksgivings with the Gause and Waterfall family.

Together John and Dora had a daughter, Margaret. Mom’s travels later in life with Margaret and her husband Clarence Waterfall, were some of her favorite memories.

In her history she writes, “Dora was wonderful to me, and I was a rebellious and antagonistic child who contributed much to her unhappiness. I write this penitently for she was a wonderful, kind mother to me all her days. Through her efforts, I was baptized at age sixteen along with my brother John, age 12 and my brother Bert age 8.” Our Mother developed a strong testimony of the gospel and had great faith.

Mom enjoyed high school, especially the social scene. She loved to date and dance and had lots of boyfriends. One of her favorites was Bus Bills. Her first date with him was a Halloween dance. After high school, Bus went off to BYU, the Army, and then a mission to Samoa, and Frances went to nursing school. It was there she met her dear, lifelong friend, Ruth Mabey Donaldson. Ruth’s friendship, and her regular phone calls the last few years meant so much to Mom.

Mother graduated from nursing school as an R.N. in September 1938. She loved being a nurse. She loved being an independent, working woman. Sometime during her schooling, her exciting social life and her career, she fell in love with Bus, because on March 18th 1940 she met his boat in Los Angeles as he returned home from his mission and they were married the next day in Phoenix.

They returned to Sandy and were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple (9 Apr 1940) and then moved to Washington D.C. where Bus worked in his brother’s typewriter store and Frances worked in the hospital. After 6 months they headed back to Sandy, where they settled on her Father’s property and spent the rest of their married life.

Mom would sometimes tell us stories about that meager first Christmas. She and Dad were so poor. She told me they had no money for gifts, but she made a treat for Dad’s Christmas morning breakfast of pancakes with some peanuts she shelled. Dad got very sick to his stomach and dashed outside to “relieve himself” of Mom’s Christmas offering. Mom was so embarrassed. She was sure the neighbors would think he had been out all night on a holiday drinking binge.

She then writes, *“January- 1941, Our fortunes improved. Bus got a job at Kennecott on the track gang and on Jan. 22, our daughter Jeanette Kay was born. I asked only for a dimple and curly*

*hair, if a girl, and got both."* Six other children followed: Karren, John, Clare, Patti, Jeff and Shauna.

There is quite an age difference from youngest to oldest in our family, nearly 24 years. In fact Mom and Jeanette Kay were both expecting at that same time and Shauna was born just a month before Mom's 47th birthday. Mother said Shauna kept her young, and it must have been true. She was very active and healthy during much of her 89 years.

Her mothering extended beyond our family. Over the years she was a second mother to eight foster children and opened her door to more than twenty people who needed a temporary place to call home.

We were listing Mother's accomplishments and some things were suggested that probably shouldn't be included in the obituary, but were true none the less, were:

Third counselor in the Bishopric,  
Self-appointed Sandy City council member,  
Voluntary Law enforcement officer- as she not only kept a tight rein on her own children, but all the neighbors' as well,  
She operated her own soup kitchen and homeless shelter, and ran a free medical clinic- and she often made house calls.  
She was a fashion designer, making beautiful formals for dances, costumes for plays, school clothes, and Christmas pajamas.  
She was an amazing psychic and somehow always knew when we were getting into trouble. She would say "My little bird told me you did it." I hated that bird!  
She was a therapist, matchmaker, teacher, slave driver, veterinarian, handyman, prison warden, referee, gardener, cheerleader, coach, chauffeur, entertainer, and track star. (She was fast!)  
She was Mother Teresa, Ann Landers, Florence Nightingale, Margaret Thatcher and Julia Childs, all rolled into one. Well, maybe not Julia Childs. There were those peanut pancakes, and Dad would sometimes tease about Mom's "burnt offerings" for dinner and joke that her pie crusts were refillable, but when he prayed and never failed to bless the kind hands that prepared our meal, we could feel the love and appreciation he felt for her service to our family. Meal times made for some great memories as we gathered together around the table.

I used to think I had the meanest Mother in the world. She made us pull weeds and wash walls. We had to be nice to everyone. We didn't have fancy toys and had to make our own fun and use our imaginations. She never bought Wonder bread or Sugar Crisp cereal. We had to have homemade bread and hot cereal instead. My imitation Barbie doll wore homemade doll clothes. I felt so deprived. I had to take my turn delivering plates of Sunday dinner to elderly neighbors. Once Effie, an elderly lady who lived by the tracks, paid me a nickel for doing some little chores. Mother was so disappointed in me for accepting the money. She wanted me to learn the joy in giving service unselfishly, as she did.

I thought Mom was especially strict with Dad. His health was always a problem, and she watched his diet so carefully, measuring out portions. Kay said she remembered Dad in the kitchen, and with Mom all the way downstairs, calling out "Bus, get out of the peanut butter." He looked at

Kay, and said, “How does she know?” I could of told him that. It was her little bird! Mom’s diligent, loving nursing care gave us all a lot more time with Dad. What a blessing.

Family, do you remember Mom saying “Stop crying, or I’ll give you something to really cry about” and “Do I need to get the wooden spoon?” I don’t remember being spanked more than once, though I am sure I deserved it, but that wooden spoon was a great motivator. I know I escaped the spoon once when I tried to hide a book in my pants to shield the spanking. Mom started to laugh so hard she had to leave the room.

I have so many fond memories and could go on forever, but when I talked too much Mom would say “Patti Jean, you must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle!” I’m sure some of you are nodding your head in agreement. So let me just close by saying that I have great love and appreciation and admiration for my mother, and for her life.

### **Talk given by John at funeral of his mother:**

11 Nov 2006

My first memory of home and Mom was at age 3. I had gotten into the nasty habit of streaking. Chagrined neighbors convinced Mom to “lay hold on me” and teach me the error of my ways. Each morning I would hit the front door, running at full stride, heading for destinations unknown—with Mom in hot pursuit! How I enjoyed those competitions with my Mom, even though the cost of losing was oh, so painful! Those were the only spankings I can remember.

I loved my Mom and wanted to become like her. I ran with her to the church to set up tables for banquets, and ran through the neighborhood with her as she cared for sick and elderly neighbors. Mom taught us that life’s moments and life’s opportunities for service and appreciation are too short to waste, and that we may need to run to take advantage of them.

Under Mom’s tutelage, it is not surprising she raised three children working in education, two in law enforcement and that I became a social worker.

Home was a family experience in industry and thrift. We made our own laundry soap, canned fruit and vegetables, processed our own chickens, and even bottled our own grape juice and homemade root beer. We took sack lunches to school and made our sacks last all week. We often came home to hot bread or chocolate chip cookies.

Mom sewed all my sisters’ prom dresses, beautiful and cherished.

Mom taught us patience, love, and respect for cultural diversity. We fed the hobos who wandered up from the rail road tracks and put them to work. Foster siblings were a way of life.

Karren was a particularly nurturing older sister. We found a frozen cat. Karren took it home to warm it up and perhaps restore it to life. She popped it in the oven and turned the gas on. Then she went out to play. Soon black smoke was pouring out of the oven and out of the doors of our



home as well. It took us weeks to eradicate the effects of black smoke and the odor of roast cat fur! I'm so glad that we learned patience, tolerance, and forgiveness in our home.

Mom's optimistic enthusiasm for life made doing evening dishes with her a cherished opportunity. We sang as we worked and laughed and talked.

"Do Ray Me, Fa So, La, Ti, Do" We learned to harmonize around the dish sink. In the mornings as we ate breakfast, our souls and voices chimed to the radio commercial, "Cream of Wheat." [Cream of Wheat is so good to eat, we have it every day. Cream of Wheat is so good to eat, we always shout hooray! Its good for growing children; for grownups—good to eat; and so for a nutritious breakfast, you can't beat Cream of Wheat!]

My sisters played the piano; Karren danced and Jeff and I played the accordion.

Mom's testimony of the Savior and His triumph over death was manifest in many ways. She and Dad compiled a family history book of our family progenitor, John Bills, Friend and Tailor of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They worked feverishly on that book for about six months and finished it only a day or two before Dad died. That book was compiled that we "*might come to know our roots and the redeeming plan of our God.*"

At age 80, Mom was still teaching a primary class. She visited with her young students during the week, shared in their challenges and accomplishments and was loved like a grandma by them.

She drove carloads of elderly neighbors to the temple. Her impaired driving became atrocious and dangerous. Mercifully, her car conveniently "broke down" and her keys disappeared. When Mom decided to sell her car to a grandson, the keys reappeared and the mechanical problems disappeared.

This year Mom renewed her driving skills careening around Harmon's Grocery Store on a battery-powered shopping cart.

She loved to "slip away" from Legacy House for a movie, a hamburger, a perm, family visits, or a cruise through the valley. She was really still a Jordan High School cheerleader at heart.

Scripture assures us the Savior took upon himself not only sin and death, but also our pains, our sicknesses, and our infirmities.

This is particularly comforting to me as I age and as I have helplessly watched Mom's hearing disappear, her body wither, and her mind shut down—a cruel by-product of Alzheimer's. At moments, she was violently uncontrollable, but more often she became a sleeping unresponsive shell, nearly devoid of senses and organized thought. Her husband and friends preceded her in death and her capacity for participation was lost.

When some of my sisters and I visited Mom the day preceding her death, she had been comatose, unresponsive to touch and hadn't even shown a swallow response.

As we seated ourselves around her, stroked her, and talked and cried and laughed and sang together, Mom's eyes opened and remained open. A smile pursed her lips.

She responded to touch, and took in small sips of food and water. She tried to sing and her ears and mind seemed to focus intently on every word and every moment. She was happy and home again with her children around the kitchen sink.

Mom will be running and singing again in her stewardship, and her reunion with Dad and her parents across the veil will be rich.

Mom, we miss you already, but in the eternal perspective, *"get the hot bread and cookies out, because we'll be home in a few minutes."*

May we use our time, talents, and resources well and reverence Him who redeems us.



Kay, John, Jeff, Karren  
Shauna, Frances, Clare, Patti



# Frances Tennant Bills



Frances & her parents  
Clara Harris; John M. Tennant



Frances 15 months



Frances 4 years



John and Frances Tennant



Frances First Grade 1923



Frances Cheerleader 1934



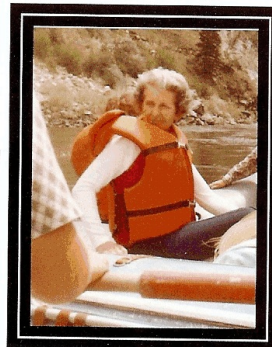
Frances Senior 1935



Frances as Nurse



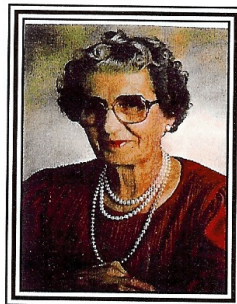
Frances & Bus



Frances in boat



Frances age 43-1960



Frances



Frances at Stone Henge in England



Frances, Shauna & Jeff at  
Disneyland 1971



Frances 2000



Last shopping trip with John  
2006



Sisters: Margaret & Frances



## Derrill Smith Bills "Bus"



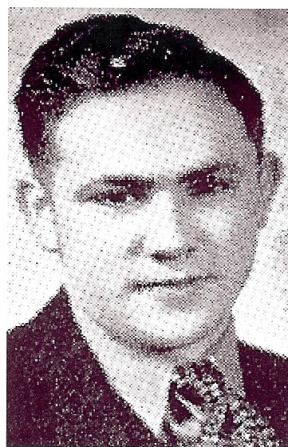
Derrill's nickname came as he drove a school bus. This is a picture of a bus like he drove. 1934-1935



Elder Bills in Samoa



Bus in High School



Bus Bills Senior 1935



Bus Bills as Cheerleader  
1934



EL LARSON O. D. BALLARD  
U. of U.  
Colo. State  
DRAPE  
English  
via  
Dear Bus  
Well!  
a well!  
For the  
Who's right  
to two champions  
D.D.B.  
Boyer  
1935

His coach's entry in yearbook 1935



Bus



Bus 1960



Bus 1984 just before he died



Bus



Bus Last Christmas 1984

## My Father:



Derrill Smith Bills  
b. 26 Jul 1916  
d. 9 Jan 1985

One time I was with my father down in Central Utah at Fish Lake. It was a large, deep lake known for huge Mackinaw trout.

We were out in the middle of the lake having good success trolling when a thunderstorm came unexpectedly out of the west, complete with wind, soaking rain and lightning. We reeled our lines in and headed for the shore as quickly as we could. Suddenly there was an explosion behind us just as we hit land. A bolt of lightning had struck the lake right where we had been.

Nature is a bigger force than we are. It is grand in its creation and amazing in its evolution; but its also terrible in its destructive force. We need to be respecters of the natural forces around us. We did say a prayer that night of appreciation that through respecting the force of nature and Divine help, we were spared from possible tragedy.

My last fishing trip with my father was a combination and culmination of many great memories. He had taken me fishing since I was a small boy. I'd become his regular companion. In the process of emancipation, I had developed credible fishing skills and known many successes. One of my hopes was to get my father out on Henry's Fork of the Snake River for an incredible evening of fly fishing—something he'd never known as a Utahan. I helped him build a fly rod and tied him his own selection of flies.

Although he'd had some heart problems and was aging rapidly, we found ourselves wading out in the middle of Henry's Fork in the Rocky Canyon below Ashton Dam. The surface was boiling with fish and my father was entranced with the experiences of those fish grabbing his fly and taking to the air in acrobatic somersaults! Night was fast approaching, the sun had dipped below the hills and an evening thunderstorm was forming against the foothills. Lightning flashed in the clouds above us and the thunder boomed and rocked. I was worried about the probability of electrocution and trying to guide my father out of the river in the dark. In the true fashion of role-reversal, I kept telling my father it was time to go and he kept responding, "*Just one more fish—just one more fish--*"

It was the last fishing trip we ever had together. His health deteriorated rapidly and it wasn't long after that when I was visiting him in the hospital after a heart attack—not knowing if he would recover. I knelt over him and asked him how he was doing. In his normal sense of good humor and desire to bring happiness to others, he responded with a wiggle of his right index finger, "*I'm feeling a little itch in my trigger finger!*" — a statement that indicated his desire to be back out in the fields and on the creek.

In all my years and trips with my father, I never heard from him an angry word, an inappropriate joke, or a cuss word. I never heard him speak negatively about anyone. His whole life seemed to be spent in kindness and efforts to bring success and great experiences to his work associates, his

neighbors, his wife, his children, and to the neighborhood boys. We all looked to him for our fishing and hunting safaris and he was called “Dad” by all my friends who knew him.

The Beginning of my love for fishing began when I was about 5 or 6 yrs old. My dad loved to fish, and I was his fishin’ pardner. After work during the Summer and Fall, he would hurry home, and take me up one of the local canyons to ply the creek in search of a wily fish. All Summer we trekked and searched, and were denied by barren waters. Finally, one evening after a bout of our usual “unsuccess,” my father drove down the canyon toward town, with a gleam in his eye: “I know where we can catch a fish,” he exclaimed. Soon we were at a private fish hatchery, where I promptly hooked and landed three healthy fish weighing at least ½ pound apiece. A nice fellow cleaned and wrapped them for us.

Then Dad suggested we go back up the canyon to see if he too could catch a fish. He sat me with my fishing rod on a culvert where the creek flowed under a dirt side road, and emptied into a deep hole. Then he wandered downstream to try his luck. Apparently the hatchery truck had just emptied a net load of fish into the very hole I was fishing, because I immediately caught three or four more trout. When my father returned without a fish from his down stream jaunt, I proudly displayed my additional catch, and suggested we go down to the private hatchery where “*he could catch something too.*”

### **More about Derrill Smith Bills, known by friends as “Bus”**

His birth certificate lists him as Darwin Smith Bills. This was in error. His blessing certificate had David Smith Bills crossed out and put Derrill.

LDS Blessing: 22 Oct 1916 by Gordon S. Bills, Bishop Riverton Ward, Jordan Stake, UT

Baptized by: Vernal C. Webb 7 Sep 1924 Riverton

Confirmed by: Gordon S. Bills 7 Sep 1924; His father, David Bills signed cert. as Bishop Riverton 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward

Deacon: 5 Aug 1928 by Thomas A. Callicott, High Priest, Riverton 2nd

Teacher: 29 Feb 1932 by Roy Glazier, High Priest,

Priest: : 14 Jan 1934 by Ensign Thomas, Elder, Riverton 2nd

Elder: 26 Sep 1937 by Edw. B. Beckstead, High Priest, Riverton 2nd

High Priest: 3 Nov 1959 by William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Council of Twelve. Sandy 4th

(HP line of authority: Wm J. Critchlow Jr. was ordained HP by George S. Richards who was ordained an Apostle by Joseph F. Smith, who was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young who was ordained a High Priest by 3 witnesses.)

Released from Bishopric in June 1965; served with Reed Anderson, Bishop and George Richards. Served as a scheduled veil worker in the Salt Lake Temple and Jordan River Temple.

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Honorable Discharge from the Army of the United States "To Whom it May Concern: This is to Certify that Derrill S. Bills, 6559534, Pvt. Spec. etc. .... is hereby honorably discharged from the military service of the United States by reason of Purchase Sec III A.R., 615-360 & 3rd Ind. Hq

9th C.A. ,dated 6-15-37. Said Derrill S. Bills was born in Riverton, Utah. When he enlisted he was 19 years of age and by occupation a mechanic. He had brown eyes, brown hair, fair complexion and was 5'4 3/4 " in height. 19 Jun 1937

Honorable Discharge from United States Navy. Served 4-14-1944 to 2-16-1945. Medical discharge.

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Mission Call to Western Samoa 20 Jul 1937. Set apart by Melvin J. Ballard. Returned 18 Mar 1940. Called by David O. McKay. Release letter: Dear Brother and Sister Bills, There comes a time when every worthy missionary receives notice of his release to return home to his loved ones. That time has now come to your splendid son, Derrill, who has proved himself to be worthy of an honorable release. He will be released March 8 and leave Samoa on that date for home. Elder Bills has filled an honorable mission. He has cheerfully accepted every call and assignment given him and has gained the love and respect of all who have known him. For the past year and a half he has been mission secretary and lived here at the mission home. Sister Tingey, the children, and myself have learned to love him as one of our own family. During his labors here in the office he never failed to do his share of the work or a little more. The splendid condition of the mission records speaks very highly of the fine manner in which he has performed his labors. Your son leaves this mission with many treasures, but the most precious treasure of all is his firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I earnestly thank you for the sacrifices that you have made for the growth of the work in this mission. I pray that your lives will be filled with the choicest blessings. Sincerely, your brother, Gilbert R. Tingey, Mission President.

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Patriarchal Blessing given 31 Jul 1955 at Sandy, UT by William D. Kuhre. #35

"My dear Brother: I bless thee in a sincere prayer of faith in the authority of the Patriarchal Office in the Church of Jesus Christ. If the Lord will give to this blessing and the words spoken the Divine Approval, we may rest assured it will prove a help, a consolation, and a guide unto thee in certain conditions in the days that follow.

I bless thee for the service that will be in thy power to give. In giving thou shalt not lose; in helping, thou shalt be strengthened to help. In the service of mankind throughout the Church, or whether it be in other avenues of activity, for all the service rendered there will come to thee a compensating strength, and power and blessing so that in the end, thou shalt be richer even though it be in experience, in knowledge, in understanding, and faith. The Lord promises the riches of the earth to His people if they will keep his commandments. This is given to the people as a whole, as a community, but each individual must work out his own financial situation, and improve by his individual efforts, and the understanding and ability within him to take care of this world's goods.

Thou art here, Brother Bills, to gain the experience of life, to learn by the lessons, and trials, and conditions that may beset thee what it is to be a servant of the Most High, and to have in the spirit of service the blessing, help, and light of the Holy Spirit. In this life thou art to learn by

comparison of one state of being, or life, with another. Thou art to learn by observation the difference between the evil and the good, not necessarily to be a partaker, or a participant in that which is evil, but by the powers of observation, and study, and experience to know that the fruits of sin and evil are death and to learn that the fruits of righteousness, and keeping the commandments of the Lord, obedience to law and order, the two great commandments given the love of God and the love of neighbor will enable thee to attain to a high state of spiritual existence that will be a blessing unto thee. Now I say this in preparation for the times from day to day when there will be opportunities to thee for service in the Church, or elsewhere, under righteous influence, these will be the doors of opportunity. Embrace them in faith and the Lord will give to thee His blessing and sustaining power.

I feel to bless thee with health and strength of body, vigor of mind, stability, and strength of intellect that thy whole body may be in harmony with thy spiritual sight that neither may be in the ascendancy to the detriment of the other, but that thy life may proceed in a harmonious and proper balance.

I declare thy lineage to be of the House of Israel, through the ancient Patriarchs who were made by the promise and covenant of the Lord a special recipient of the Gospel and through the succeeding ages to be a blessing unto the children of men. Down through the ages through the Ephraim Nation thou hast come, and the Gospel net has found thee, or thy forebearers, and has given thee place and being in the Church of Christ. This is a precious heritage and Israel is being sought for now, even those of Ephraim, preparatory to the coming of the Other tribes for their blessings.

I seal thee up unto the Day of Redemption and bless thee as a servant of the Lord which thou canst be through the days of thy life to be worthy of sustaining power of the Holy Spirit to give thee strength of purpose, faith to prevail, determination to succeed and ability to declare the Word by both example and precept. Do that which thy hand findeth to do in faith from day to day, keeping the commandments of the Lord, and in the end thou shalt receive the blessings of the Lord in that greatest gift, eternal life. May thy influence in thy family stand for righteousness, for good under the Divine guidance.

This is the blessing upon thy head, spoken in faith, dependant upon thy faithfulness and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

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### **A talk given by Derrill Smith Bills abt 1970:**

My dear Brothers and Sisters, I am grateful for this opportunity to say a few words to you tonight. I am especially thankful for my family, and pleased too, that they could be here tonight and participate in these services. I want you to know that Frances and I love and appreciate all of them and their families. I am especially grateful for my wife and I would like to publically express my love for her.



As Latter-day Saints, I am sure that you will all agree when I say, That of all things on the face of this earth, our families are the most important things of our lives and that our Family should be our NUMBER ONE GOAL. One may rise to the top of any organization. One's picture may adorn the walls of homes. One's speeches, income, and popularity may be almost legendary, but without success in the home there is little that really makes any difference.

Men will study the stock markets for hour after hour, day after day, trying to determine where they can get the greatest returns on their investments. They will spend years and years on education, which I'm the first to admit are all quite necessary to provide for our families, but yet, how often do we completely ignore and fail to spend just five minutes of time with our children. That little girl, or little boy, that little Cub Scout who needs just minutes of our time may be the greatest investment of our lives and certainly the most important.

Not only should we give of our time to those with us now, the living, but also we should honor and do all we can for those who have passed on. As Latter-day Saints our goals are for an eternal family. We have been commanded that we should do genealogy.

In as much as we are celebrating the 24th of July, the coming of the Pioneers to this valley, let me share with you, parts of my Grandfather, William A. Bill's journal. He, too, was a true pioneer. The journal which he left was written in his own handwriting, and is now among my most treasured possessions: Telling of his early life, he says, *"I heard my mother say that while we were at Farr West, when the mob were there about the time they took Joseph and Hyrum Smith and others to Jackson Co., Missouri, and at the time of the Haun Mill Massacre, that she stood with me in her arms ready to hand me over to be killed first, then she was willing to die. But we got clear to encounter more hardships. We were driven from place to place until we reached Commerce (Nauvoo) in 1839. As I grew older, I assisted in the building of that beautiful City of Nauvoo. I was well acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum and their father and mother as also William and son, Carlos Smith. We were close neighbors. Father, being a tailor, made their clothing. I used to take Joseph and Hyrum's clothes to Joseph's house. His mother once showed me the mummies, they in form, appeared as natural as any other person would after being dried up as they were. They were in the color of dark sole leather, common size, five in number, if I recollect aright. Father Smith once gave me a blessing. I recollect many things that transpired in Nauvoo. I was baptized and confirmed by Father John Burgess in the Spring of 1844, previous to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith."*

I am proud of the pioneer heritage that I have--the sacrifices and the hardships they endured, the records and testimonies, they left for us---and most of all, the good name they left for us will always be a testimony to me. I pray that we may all live up to the many worthy ideals and teachings of our pioneer ancestry.

I am reminded of a story that I once read, "At a church meeting, discussing the husband, the speaker told of the joy that comes when a husband sends flowers to his wife. He spoke so convincingly that one of his listeners went to the florist right after the session, sent a dozen roses to his wife, and charged them to the speaker." No matter who we charge it to, we get the full value of every act of love that tells both our wife and our children that we are in love.

I will never forget the day when our first little boy was born. The Doctor invited me into the delivery room to observe. After the delivery, Frances asked, "*Did you see the baby?*" I answered, "*Yes, and it looks just like me!*" Frances said, "*Oh, well, We are going to keep him anyhow!*"



The David Bills Home that John's father, Derrill, grew up in. Located in Riverton, Utah — we went inside this awesome home and it is huge and beautiful. John recalls visiting his Aunt Louie who lived here when John was a child. Louetta, "Louie" was Derrill's oldest sister. Uncle Lance and Aunt Cecila also lived here when John was young.



Hanging picture: David Lauritz (he was first child, born 1890; died at age 5 in 1895)

Back row: Ebba, Henry, Sylvia, Leo, Lance, Mae, Clarence "Dutch" , Ken, Millie

Front: Venice, Jessie, Mother (Lorena), Derrill "Bus", Melva, Father (David), Gordon "Don", Louie

Derrill "Bus" is the youngest little boy – there is a 26 year age span between oldest and youngest siblings!.

### **Derrill S. Bills was a member of the National Society of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers. This was his history:**

"I, Derrill Smith Bills, called "Bus", was born July 26, 1916 in Riverton, Salt Lake County, Utah, a son of David and Lorena E. Smith Bills. both my parents were children of 1847 and 1848 companies of pioneers. It was my privilege to be the 16th child of 15 living children, and since Dad's philosophy was to keep children busy and learn to work, I can never remember being idle.

Dad owned a large farm, grocery store, a slaughter-house, a big barn with many cattle and horses, and a home large enough to house his family and others. We were happy as a family. Dad was the Bishop and received spiritual guidance, as did his family.

My schooling took place at Riverton grade school, until I became ill. For over a year, I was ill and confined to bed with Rheumatic Fever, and missed seventh grade. At this time I was given a very special blessing and then began to mend, but always remained a year behind kids my age. High school was Jordan High, where I played drums in the band, drove a school bus, became Junior Class President, cheer-leader my senior year, and graduated in 1935.

In the fall of 1935, I started school at the BYU, but became ill at Christmas and lost my credits. So

I tackled the U.S. Army Air Corps at Palo Alto, California. finishing basics, I was selected to enter Meteorology school at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, work I really enjoyed. An LDS mission call found me on my way to Samoa by October 18, 1937, where I served two and one-half years in the most beautiful place on earth.

On my return to the States, my school sweetheart, Frances Tennant, met me at the boat in Los Angeles, and we were married in Phoenix, Arizona, March 19, 1940. After a week's vacation and a visit with our folks, and Temple sealing, we left for Washington, D.C. to work with a brother in his typewriter store. After six months, we decided that it was a poor place to raise a family, and so returned to Sandy, Utah, where we settled on a certain block and spent the rest of our married life.

January of 1941 was my lucky month for I was hired at Utah Copper on the track, and two weeks later, our first child was born, a darling daughter, Jeanette Kay. During the next 23 years, we added two boys, John Derrill and Jeffrey Tennant; and four girls, Karren, Clare, Patti Jean, and Shauna.

In 1941-42 war clouds began to form. In 1944, when I was due to be drafted, I enlisted to get a rank in the Navy Air Force, but was given a medical release in California. I returned to re-employment at the Utah Copper, which later became Kennecott Copper Corp., serving as payroll and accountant. I also served as supervisor of deduction at Salt Lake and Bingham. During these 33 years, my Church duties included Scoutmaster for many years, Elders Quorum President, High Priest Advisor, Second Counselor in the Bishopric.

In November 1971, following a heart attack, I was unable to return to work, and after two months had heart surgery. At this time I took retirement. For nearly eight years I was privileged to be an ordinance worker in the Salt Lake and Jordan River temples.

Frances and I have written a book on John Bill's history, my great-grandfather. At this time six of the children are married, and we boast of twenty-three grandchildren. We find much joy in our blessings. ---by Bus, 2/15,1984.

P.S. (by Frances) Derrill valued his membership in the Sons of Utah Pioneers, and we enjoyed their company. It is my pleasure to enter his life resume – a massive heart attack ended his life here on January 9, 1985. He rests in the South Jordan Cemetery, near his parents and his pioneer grandfather, William A. Bills. "Bus" as he was best known, was such a kind and loving person, Heaven must surely be his second mission calling.

**Employment:** Control Clerk in Kennecott's new machine accounting section. Duties included performing the first step in payroll preparation after the time cards reach the accounting office. They break down into various groupings by property, travel pay due, the eight-hour workers, the over-time workers and other categories. These cards then go into a machine which punches the hours worked alongside other punched data on the cards.

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Following is a Talk given by Derrill Smith Bills at a Sacrament Meeting in which he, Lynn and Clare Ostler each spoke on Family Preparedness.

In speaking of preparedness, I feel almost like a story I heard once. A colored minister went to visit another minister friend. Upon arriving at his home, he found the minister in his study reading and writing. The colored minister asked, "What is you all doing?" The minister replied that he was preparing the sermon that he intended to give next Sunday.

"O-O-O – that's bad!" said the first. "Don't you all know that the devil himself is looking over your shoulder? He's reading everything you're going to say. He's got your people prepared. "Now me," he says, "I never prepare my sermon ahead of time. When I speak, neither me nor the devil himself knows what I'm going to say."

I'm grateful for the privilege to participate in these services. It's a great challenge to follow such capable speakers as Clare and Lynn. I ask an interest in your faith and prayers that I may say something that will not detract from the spirit of this meeting.

I appreciate the many things that have been given on family preparedness, and I'd like to continue with my thoughts on family preparedness on things which are spiritual.

First, I would like to take you back with me to the summer of the Teton Dam flood. Two of my children with their families were involved in this flood. I went immediately to the flood scene and was asked by one of the bishops in the area to assist in establishing a command post, and later in its operation.

My job was to help correlate and direct the activities of hundreds of the volunteer laborers who were to follow in the cleanup. I met many people and made many friends. They were the greatest and most courageous people on earth.

The devastation and destruction there was unbelievable. Many of their homes were completely swept away. Their homes, farms, implements, furniture, and clothing were all gone. And yet, in their own words, many would say, "Thank God we have our families!"

I received a letter from my daughter several months after the flood. Her letter stated that she had held a bitterness in her heart. She and her husband had just built a new home about a year before, and it was practically destroyed. "Why could this happen to me?" she said. "What did I do to deserve this? Am I being punished?" These were the things that were going through her mind.



Then in her letter she told me that several months after the flood she had been to her stake house to see the girls take off for their girls' camp for the year. There was a great deal of excitement and confusion as the trucks and buses were moving about in the parking lot loading the girls and their equipment. She had with her, her three-year old son. She said just for a second she took her eyes off her son, and in the commotion she heard a squealing of voices and of brakes.

A big two-wheeler truck was beginning to move. She heard a frightful scream, and saw a crowd rushing over. She went with them to learn what had happened. She saw her young boy lying on the ground. His shirt and outer clothing were tightly pinned beneath two wheels of the truck. It had not yet passed over his body. They were very carefully backing up the truck to free him.

She said she quickly grasped the boy up into her arms, and she went into the stake house into a room where she could be by herself. She got down on her knees and thanked God for sparing the life of her child. She said that she knew now what all the others had been saying "—that their children were their most priceless possessions."

I love my family. They, too, are my most priceless possessions. I know that your families are to you, too. For a moment, let us consider a few of the things that we might do to keep our families together.

I remember a story I heard once about Eddie Canter, one of the great comedians. He said a man would spend hours and hours studying the stock market, computing interest rates and striving to get information where he could make his greatest investments. Yet, over on the couch would be a young son or daughter begging for two of three minutes of his time.

First, let us consider the blessings of the temple. Have we done all that we can do to keep our families an eternal family? Have we been married in the temple? Have our children been sealed to us for time and all eternity? Have our parents' temple work been completed? Have we researched the genealogy of our parents and ancestors? Is their temple work completed? Do we attend the temple often? Do we hold a current temple recommend? Do we attend our church meetings regularly? Are we active in doing the things that we should do? Do we obey the word of wisdom? Are we honest with our fellow men and ourselves? Do we pay our tithing? Do we obey the Sabbath? Do we hold family prayers? Do we have our own regular family home evening service?

If we would consider these questions as a priesthood interview with our father, grandfather, or great grandfather, could we answer the way he would hope we would? We are his most precious possessions. He wants to be with us for eternity! Interestingly, he did do all these things with his family!

I'm sure you'll all agree with me that there are many things that we can all improve upon. I know that we can not do all these things at once. We are told that life by the yard is hard, but life by the inch is a cinch. A thousand mile march is accomplished by taking just one tiny step at a time. Or in other words, eating an elephant is only possible by taking one bite at a time.

It is my humble prayer that we'll all strive to do all we can to keep our family eternal. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **The last letter written by Derrill Smith Bills – 13 days prior to his death:**

27 Dec 1984 Dearest family, We have just had one of the nicest, most fun and most joyous Christmases ever. Mother and I would like to thank you all most sincerely for the many gifts, kindness, and for all of your love and thoughtfulness each of you have given and shared with us.

We spent Christmas eve with Clare and Lynn and family along with two of our ward's elderly widows. We played games that were fun and then had a most DELICIOUS turkey dinner with all the trimmings you could ever imagine. Clare, it was really scrumptious and enjoyed by all. This was ended with a fine and fitting family night program which was very well planned and enjoyed by all.



Christmas morning was shared together with just Shauna, Mom and me for the first hour or two. It surely seemed different from the good old days when our center hall-way used to be teeming with the excited children waiting to charge the Christmas tree. Patti and Clare were here later in the day with Talaisa, Megan, Beth Ann, and Corrine. All of whom made it feel and sound more like "old times."

The following day Ken and Kay were here with their family which added to our joy and happiness. Really, you just don't know the joy and happiness you share until you have grandchildren of your own.



We had a family party and lunch together the following day. Grandma was Mrs. Santa Claus and did a super job of it. Again let me thank you all sincerely from the bottom of my heart for the gifts each of you gave, but also for the love and companionship that we all enjoyed together.

John, Joy, and family, we missed you but you, too, were with us all in our hearts. Thanks to you, too, for everything. We love and missed you.

Mom and I took a little trip the latter part of October. A real winter storm chased us down towards St. George, Utah, where we visited friends and relatives

along the way. We took in a session at the Mesa temple, then met Regan and his companion, with permission of his Mission president. We enjoyed taking them both out to dinner. We had a very lovely visit. It was so good to see him. He looks great and is doing a fine job. We can all be proud of him.

From Mesa, we traveled 80 miles to Globe, where we spent Sunday with my sister, Aunt Millie. Clare will remember Millie and Jack when we went for a swim and boat ride with them. "Save me. save me." Karren, too, will remember being chased by some mules on the Indian Reservation where we were fishing, and John up to his knees in water casting in the stream for a big one. It was real fun.



Frances and Bus Bills

We then went from Globe to Tucson and over to Tombstone, Arizona where we visited the old "Boot-Hill Cemetery" the "O.K. Corral" and the places of "Wyatt Earp and Doc Halliday". It was very interesting and fun. We returned to Utah to cool off our feet and boy our weather is doing its part to help us do just that.

Mom and I are both house-bound by the weather. Mom and I have been busy the past two weeks, Mother for the past few years, assembling a Bills family genealogy book. She has done an excellent job of it. You all will learn more of it a little later on.

We are happy to have Shauna with us for the Christmas holidays. She, too, has had a big hand in helping with the book. We love her and enjoy her, too. We both think our children are the greatest. It is wonderful to feel this way. I'll bet you all feel the same for your own families, too.

Again. let me say thanks again to you all. We love you, miss you, and think of you all real often, if only just in our prayers. This "family letter" is great and truly most appreciated. We enjoy hearing from each of you. We are the world's worst letter writers, but we do love and think of you real often. With love, Dad.

My dear kids, We love you and appreciate the gifts, phone calls and caring. Thanks for the visits and help. More in next letter. I may keep a diary---after we completely complete the Bills book. As ever...Mom.



Siblings of Derrill Smith Bills – Taken at the funeral of their mother on 17 Jun 1947. Back Row: Bus, Mae, Jessie, Leo, Louie  
Front Row: Don, Ebba, Clarence “Dutch”, Lance, Venice, Melva, Millie, Ken

## **Life Sketch of Derrill Smith Bills**

given by Jeanette Kay Bills Howell at his funeral

Dad was born on the 26th day of July, 1916 in Riverton, Utah, the youngest of sixteen children of David Bills and Lorena Emeline Smith. His early childhood was a happy one filled with fond memories. His father was a Bishop, operated a grocery store, a slaughter yard, fed livestock, and ran several large farms. His mother worked hard and was always busy rendering lard, dressing poultry, making butter, and assisting in preparing things for the store, as well as caring for her large family. Understandably, he never remembered having many idle moments around home. He was a cheerful child who everyone lovingly called "Buster". The nickname was shortened to "Bus" as he grew older, and that was how he was known all his life.

Dad learned well his father's philosophy that "children should be busy and should learn to work." His attention to his family, his dedication to Church responsibilities, his thorough counseling of the young men who came to earn merit badges in scouting, and his dependability and loyalty to Kennecott during the many years he worked there are evidence of his principles.

He loved swimming in the canal, playing in the haystacks, and boasted of having the biggest and highest hay barn in town. This became a favorite place for neighborhood games. Most Sunday afternoons they would stage a "rodeo"--riding yearling calves around the barnyard until his father's sudden return home from church meetings would put an end to all the fun.

When Dad was about eleven and a half years old, he was stricken with critical rheumatic fever, bright's disease, blood conditions, and several other serious disorders which forced him to be confined to bed. His condition was not made known to him at that time, but years later, he was told by parents that the doctor had said he would never rise from his bed again. Shortly after his twelfth birthday, Dad was given a blessing in which he was promised that he would rise from his bed of affliction, that he would fulfill a mission here upon the earth, and that a foreign nation would hear his voice preaching the gospel and that he would do much good among them. Before long, he was back in school and finished junior high and high school with no health problems and was able to participate in many activities, even as a cheerleader at Jordan.

Dad served in the Air Force and upon his discharge received a call to serve a mission to the Samoan Islands. This was an important and memorable time in Dad's life. In quoting from his personal history, he writes, *"my mission was the greatest and best experience of my life. I will never forget the Polynesian people and the love that I have for them."* Mom and Dad met while attending Jordan High School and had become engaged before Dad left for Samoa. His sweetheart had always been "Franny" but Dad wasn't sure until he saw her as he arrived back in Los Angeles, his welcoming committee of one, that she would become his wife. Derrill S. Bills and Frances Jeanette Tennant were married March 19, 1940.



Even newly weds need more than love to live on, and Mom and Dad found their first job in Washington, D.C. working for his brother, Dutch, in his typewriter business. After a short time they returned to Sandy, Utah, finding it a better place to raise their expected family. Dad accepted a job at Kennecott Cooper where he remained for 33 years.

On 22 Jan 1941, Jeanette Kay was born. Three years later, on 4 Jun 1944, Karren was born while Dad was in Navy bootcamp. While serving in the Navy, in Dad's typical desire to serve others, he volunteered to donate blood for the Red Cross. During the routine pre-examination, a health problem was discovered that resulted in hospitalization, and later, a medical discharge.

John Derrill was born 15 Jul 1945, followed by Clare Renae on May 6, 1950 and Patti on 16 Jun 1954. Dad needed another fishing and hunting partner and on 19 Jan 1958, Jeffrey Tennant was born. The family was now complete except for a curly-haired daughter, Shauna Frances, who was born 3 Aug 1964.

Dad was always very proud of his family and loved to be with them. It was not uncommon for him to take report cards to the office to show fellow workers the academic accomplishments, or to be at every program and ball game. Nor was it uncommon while sitting in the boat on the lake in the summer heat for Dad to tell us what a good time we were having even if the fish refused to bite.

Dad instilled within his family a love for spiritual things through Family Home Evening, family prayer, and using the priesthood to bless our family in times of sickness and as we went away to school and into marriage. Dad found great joy in the Gospel and willingly gave of his time to serve in many church callings, whether it was scoutmaster, High Priest group leader, Elder's Quorum President, time at the cannery, counselor in the bishopric, or as a temple worker in both the Salt Lake and Jordan River temples. He was also willing to open his home and heart on numerous occasions to foster children or to someone who needed a little special attention while being nursed back to health by Mom. We all remember well MANY times we went with Dad as he uncomplainingly ran errands for Mom when she obligated herself for more "missions of mercy" than she could possibly handle alone.

Dad found great joy in simple things in life. He loved to walk through Skaggs and K-Mart and look at the sporting goods, with seldom an intention or temptation to buy. He loved to go for a ride and look at the scenery, and was most happy when he could share the beautiful sights with someone else. He loved to have his family come home. He loved to go fishing and hunting and really didn't mind if he came home empty-handed. He delighted in treating everyone to sweets, probably because he couldn't have them himself. He liked music and loved to square dance. Dad could be happy square dancing two or three nights per week. Dad loved to read stories that reminded him of his boyhood. His favorites were those written by Blaine Yorgason, whose family became Dad's personal friends, and the books about the Great Brain by W.D. Fitzgerald. Dad kept track of the number of miles he rode his exercise bike. He was very proud of the 1390 miles he had peddled during the last year---enough to take him over half-way across the United States. Dad's nature allowed him to enjoy an experience just as much the second, third, and fifteenth time around as the first. He loved to share with others his scrapbooks and other collections that he

assembled of happy experiences in his life. He loved to reminisce and could enjoy a good storytelling session like no one else. Often these stories were about fishing and hunting trips, but also included much about Samoa, the Easter camping safaris, his 21 grandchildren (whom he called his "cookies"), ward members, neighbors, and funny little jokes and tales. He would chuckle when he would re-live the many mornings when Shauna, a pre-schooler, and anxious to be with her Dad, would get up at 6 a.m., go into the bathroom, and use the razor he provided her with the blade removed. They would both lather up and she would shave her little pink cheeks as he got rid of his stubble.

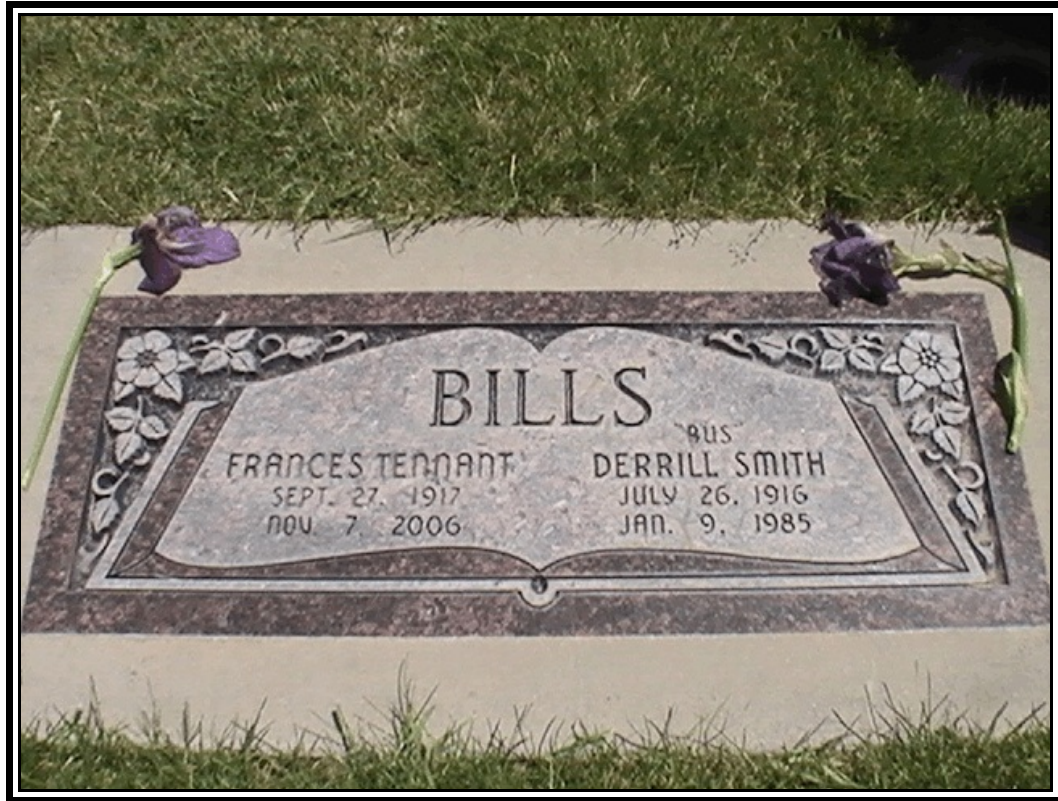
In November of 1971, Dad was hospitalized with a serious heart attack. Even during this time of crisis, when we didn't know if he would live, Dad retained his sense of humor. With tubes in his nose and arms, connected to all kinds of monitors and equipment, and struggling to speak, he commented to John's question of, "*How are you, Dad?*" by wiggling the first finger on his left hand, his trigger finger, and said, "*This finger is really itching!*" It WAS hunting season.

Dad underwent open heart surgery one year later. The following year he was retired from Kennecott, which gave him more time to be with Mother, and give thought to things he wanted to accomplish. An opportunity arose for him to be of service in 1976 when the Teton Dam burst. He hurriedly left for Idaho to assist his daughter and family, but ended up running the command post for the Sugar City First Ward for three weeks. He gave great service to so many in assigning volunteers, manning the information center, taking orders for needed materials and laborers, and in relaying messages to both church and governmental officials.

Grandpa and Grandma Bills instilled the love of genealogy in their children. This may have been what prompted Dad to undertake a project to publish a complete history of the Bills family back to his great grandfather, John Bills, who was a friend and servant of the prophet, Joseph Smith. During the past two years Mother and Dad have spent many hundreds of hours in researching, writing life stories, editing and compiling a book dedicated to the children and grandchildren of David Bills for them to know who they are, to know the meaning of sacrifice, and to learn love and respect for our wonderful forefathers and mothers. The last pages of this book were completed Tuesday evening, January 8, 1985. Dad left this life a few hours later to meet those about whom he had been writing. This is a lasting gift of love he gave to his family, and they are completed and here for you today.

No story of Dad's life could be complete without paying tribute to Mother who loved and worked with him and cared so tenderly for him. Our father was a gentle and uncomplaining man and treated Mother with respect and dignity, and great appreciation. Mother is a woman of total dedication and selflessness, whose care for Dad allowed us all his companionship for an extra measure of time. We are proud and appreciative of our Dad. All of our lives have been blessed by this good man.-----Life Sketch given at funeral by Jeanette Bills Howell, daughter.

His grave was dedicated by his son, John Derrill Bills.



David Bills and youngest son, Derrill Smith Bills. Derrill "Bus" is in cheerleading uniform for Jordan High School -1935.



Three generations of Bills: John, Derrill, and Jade.  
John has often been told he looks like his dad; I think he looks like his grandfather, David Bills, too!



## Jeanette Kay Bills



Kay, John, Karren Bills abt 1947

My sister Kay was 4 ½ years older than I and she was a great example for all of her brothers and sisters, although we never expressed that during our growing up years. She was always clean and modest in her dress and in her actions. She showed respect and obedience to our parents and her teachers. She was well-organized and diligent in her studies and she



kept an impeccable bedroom Her friends included the outstanding students at Jordan High School and in our neighborhood. Kay was involved in Student Government throughout high school and dated guys who dressed and behaved well and who were school and church leaders and who continued in their lives to do good things. I not only admired my sister, but I admired all the friends she associated with. They set a great example of integrity and virtue and civic-minded service.

Kay was enough older than I was that I didn't even bother to try and tease her like I did Karren and Clare. She was fun-loving and a happy gal but her



Jeanette "Kay" Bills

### **Here Hair Makes The Difference**

When my oldest brother was a very small boy, mother had a picture taken of him showing his long and curly hair. The picture was framed and placed on the piano. The day after it was displayed there, his mother took him to a barber shop for a hair cut; his long curly hair was cut off.

Johnnie was quite sad about these events, and when his grandmother came to visit us he took her to see his picture. "See that picture?" he said. "That is me when I was a little girl."

*Jeanette Kay Bills  
280 East Sixth South  
Sandy, Utah*

interests were so different than mine that I didn't always appreciate her hobbies and her version of what makes life happy. She told me she was SO GLAD when I came along so she could stop being my Dad's hunting and fishing partner! She even went to scout camp once with dad before I was old enough! She really wanted to be a young lady and she was.



John – when he was a little girl!

Although the family always called her Kay, everyone else calls her Jeanette. When she was in first grade, her teacher called her Jeanette and it stuck. She says she was afraid to correct her teacher, so has been known by her associates throughout her life as Jeanette – a fitting name with a lot of genealogical heritage!

## Kay's Memories of John

John,

You are the little brother who “bumped” me out of being Dad’s fishing and hunting partner!! Just so you don’t feel too guilty about it, I really never did like those sports as much as you and Dad did anyway! I thought it was really great to have a little brother, and then I could play with my paper dolls and roller skate and play jacks and hopscotch and concentrate on my pop-bottle cap collection.



I remember you mostly as being off with Dad or your friends...Always! It seemed to me that you were given much more freedom than we girls who had to help with the housework. You were not in trouble nearly as much as I was either. Perhaps there is some connection there....Hmmm...I wonder!

Eddie Elswood, Glenn Watts and Artie Parker are your friends I remember best. Billie Breeze and Mel Gause spent time at our house, too, but I don’t have many memories of them being “regulars.” I know there were others, because you were nice to everyone. I believe that Mom was the real instigator of some of those friendships. If there was any little boy who was picked on, neglected, or a little different, or needed a friend, it seemed she saw to it that you invited them over, played with them, and developed a friendship.

There was NO chance that you could grow up to be anything but a caring champion for the underdog, scouter, and outdoors man. You DO have a **Louder** laugh than Dad had, but you both enjoyed a good joke. From the tip of your tongue sticking out the side of your mouth when you were concentrating on something, your walk, the eternal scouter, your high-blood-pressure and diabetes, to your love for and pride in your wife (both Joyanne and Cheryl), and children and grandchildren, you are “Bus Bills” all over again. I guess that is part of the reason we all love you so much.



I still laugh (and tell friends) about what a track star you were in high school, and the day we saw Mom race (or was it chase?) You clear around the block. Did she beat you, or were you just BARELY ahead of her? I remember (perhaps **not quite** accurately) that you, and she in her house dress, took off around Madsen’s corner, around Lund’s (Grandpa and Grandma Tennant’s old house) on past Boulden’s (our old house) and back to our front yard. The neighbor kids were all cheering when you two came in a dead heat to the finish, and Mom collapsed on our lawn in a fit of laughter, as we whooped and hollered. If the scene was even half as good as I remember it, it was great!

You are a wonderful brother, and I love you lots. Jeanette “Kay” Bills Howell



## Karren Bills



Karren and Johnny Bills

Karren was 13 months older than I was – the closest of any of my parent’s children in age – and she had a very big heart. She spent a lot of time in attempting to rescue wayward schoolmates and stray cats and dogs. She was a true romantic. One day she found a cat that had attempted to climb through a chain-link fence at the old Stake Center in Sandy on a wintery afternoon. The cat had become entangled in the fence and frozen to death and was as hard as a rock.

True to her altruistic nature, she brought it home to thaw it out in the oven and then promptly became distracted by other activities and left the house. When we arrived home sometime later, the house was full of black smoke and reeked of a terrible odor which seemed to stay for weeks. When the oven cleared, we found only a few black cinders of that poor char-broiled cat!

I enjoyed teasing Karren. My parents went on a trip to California and left us in the care of a nursing associate and friend of my Mother, Ruth Donaldson from Salt Lake. It was real weird to have a strange woman in our home for nearly a week and to be accountable to her.

From Knottsberry Farm, my parents brought me a buckskin jacket complete with leather fringe—likely very expensive and elicited the best of care. One day while wearing the jacket, I was teasing my sister, Karren. I had a jar of homemade chocolate syrup which was great for decorating ice cream and making chocolate milk. In a teasing manner, I threatened to pour some of that chocolate syrup on my sister’s head and she challenged me not to! I took the challenge and poured a few drops right in the middle of the top of her brown head!

In a fit of frustration, she grabbed the bottle away from me and poured the whole bottle over my head and onto that buckskin jacket. I can’t remember now whether or not dry cleaning is very effective with chocolate syrup, but I can guarantee you that it elicits emotional responses— not only from sisters, but from parents as well!

One night Karren was helping me hunt night crawlers to sell. Karren was over at the Lund’s home (previously my Grandpa Tennant’s home). There were some huge pine trees on that corner lawn and night crawler hunting there was pretty productive—especially in the garden where we were not supposed to be. But if we stepped lightly, we never left a track and did no damage—so we were never chased off.

Summertime brought out a lot of big bugs and on this particular evening, a large Japanese beetle landed on my sister. I can’t remember whether or not Japanese beetles really bite, but I do remember that they are huge, look



Japanese Beetle

menacing, and make a lot of noise. They have hairy, scaly legs that let you know loud and clear that they are on you and maybe have slipped down under your shirt.

Anyway—when this Japanese beetle landed on my sister, she went into hysterics—screaming and crying and headed home at full speed. It seems like it took over an hour and lots of tender, loving care from my Mom before she settled down. I learned something about emotions and a distressed girl on that humid summer evening during my Junior High School years. However, that did not cure my from teasing my sister!

I sneaked into the front room one Christmas Eve after Santa had been there and replaced all the goodies in Karren's sock with a couple lumps of coal. That brought out all those female emotions and made me realize I'd made a terribly bad choice!

Karren was with me when we went to "The Haunted House" in Murray. We (David Ostler and Karren, me and Jean Wilson) heard about a new show that had come to Salt Lake and was playing at the Center Theater. It was an Alfred Hitchcock Thriller starring Anthony Perkins entitled "Psycho."

The show was a suspense thriller—murder mystery filmed in an old house on a hill very much like the Haunted House in Murray that we planned to visit. Our objective was to perhaps see the Elderly Woman reputed to live there, maybe catch a few of the many cats that frequented the area, and just to enjoy some great adventure!

We parked our car and had gone two or three-hundred yards up the path toward the old mansion on a hill—when suddenly a crowd of young people jumped out of the bushes and nearly scared us to death! They, too, had been inspired by the Psycho movie to come to this spot for a bit of adventure. So we joined them in the bushes and waited for the next unsuspecting group of kids to come up the path—and come they did—group after group spaced about 15 minutes apart for a good part of the evening!

Each succeeding group of frightened young people would join the group of spooks to wait for the next group of curiosity seekers. The spooks group continued to grow until there were about 35 of us in the bushes!

However, it was we who were surprised by the next group of travelers up the path! Several policemen from the Murray City Police Department! We all ran through the bushes hoping to make it to our cars. As I recall, I got caught when I stopped to help my sister through a fence. Another of my friends and his date made it to the car, only to find a police officer sitting in the back seat!



We were all escorted to the  
Murray City Police Station  
and managed to pretty well



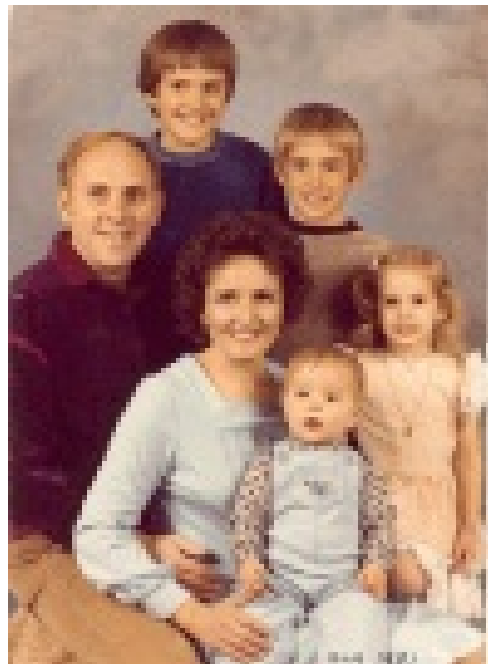
MT. JORDAN 1957-58

*Mr. and Mrs. Derrill S. Bills  
request the pleasure of your company  
at a wedding reception following the  
Salt Lake Temple Ceremony  
of their daughter  
Karen  
and  
Mr. G. Michael Heinecke  
son of Mr. and Mrs. George F. Heinecke  
on Friday, the twenty-eighth day of May  
nineteen hundred and sixty-five  
from seven until ten o'clock  
Sandy Fourth Ward Chapel  
500 South 700 East  
Sandy, Utah*

fill the building. The police officers; disoriented by our numbers tried some scare tactics! They gave us all a choice of calling our parents and having them come pick us up or spending the night in jail for trespassing and disturbing the peace. I think, of the whole group, I was the only one who didn't want to inconvenience my parents and objectively chose to spend the night in jail. I suppose they really couldn't keep me in jail because they turned me loose with the whole crowd about 30 minutes later. It was an exciting night and a memorable experience to share with my sister.



Karren



Mike and Karren with David, Derrill, Michelle and Andrew Heinecke

## Clare Renae Bills

Clare was five years younger than I. She was a feminine little sister who was happy being a girl. I was so busy being a boy that I didn't pay a lot of attention to my little sisters—though they were special people I grew up with. My Mom was always so busy with her girls that I had a lot of freedom in my youth.



*Mr. and Mrs. Derrill S. Bills  
request the pleasure of your company  
at the wedding reception  
of their daughter  
Clare Renae  
and  
Mr. Orville Lynn Ostler  
son of Mr. and Mrs. Orville J. Ostler  
on Thursday evening, July twenty-second  
nineteen hundred and seventy-one  
from eight until ten o'clock  
Sandy Stake Center  
9331 South 400 East  
Sandy, Utah*

Clare told me that she would sneak downstairs and hide behind the gas heater when I was dating Joyanne and would bring her home to watch television. She would listen to us talk and watch us in our relationship. She told me that it was a fascinating thing for her to do and that she was impressed that I always behaved in an appropriate manner. She told me she looked to me as a model of how you should behave. It was an interesting experience for me because I never knew that I was being watched.

I teased Clare a little bit and called her Clara Bell. To an extent, we were good friends growing up. She often had a crush on my friends and really liked being around and imitating Joyanne when we were dating.



## Clare's Memories of John:

Clare, Mom, John, Kay, with Patti in front. About 1957.



John's a GREAT guy! From Younger sister, Clare...

Writing this was a good opportunity to think of all the reasons why I love and admire him. I've categorized memories of my brother John into three time periods.

### **1956 to 1961**

#### **John, the Classic Tease**

#### **Clare, the Champion of Bratty Little Sisters**

I think John loved to tease me for three reasons: First, I was an easy target because I was gullible. Second, I was a brat, and probably deserved every bit of his teasing. Third, tattling was not tolerated by Mom, so John was safe from retribution.

Here are some of the important lessons I learned from my brother, The Tease.

1. Never put coins or nails on the railroad tracks in hopes that they'd be flattened by a passing train. Instead, the train would be derailed and come thundering through the neighborhood. There's a 99% chance that the engine would crash right through the house and come to rest in my own bedroom, leaving me flattened instead.
2. Never stand too close when watching a passing train. There's a force that comes from the smoke stack on an engine that's strong enough to suck kids right up inside of it. Just as John described, every time a train passed, I could feel myself being unwillingly pulled towards the smoke stack, and would run in terror in the opposite direction.
3. All lizards and toads caught in the slag dump near our house were extremely dangerous. There was more than enough poison in their bites to make little kids swell up and die. John was immune to their bites, because he knew how to tame them by stroking their bellies. However, it would be certain death for me if one jumped out of his hand (or was tossed!) and landed on me. He always seemed to have a lizard hiding in his pocket, so I kept my distance from John, just in case.
4. There was a ghost in the basement who waited for me to go into the fruit room to get something from storage for Mom. As soon as I stepped inside, the door would quickly close, and the lock would slide into place. Fortunately, John's basement bedroom was around ten feet away from the fruit room. Eventually he'd hear my wailing and frantic pounding on the door, and come to my rescue. When we changed houses, that ghost moved with us! I was never truly safe from being locked up with bottled peaches and pears.
5. A true fisherman can carry worms in his pockets, salmon eggs in his mouth, and gutted catfish on a string over his shoulder without thinking twice. I failed all three of John's tests.
6. Bills' kids eat their cake in bowl with milk poured over the top of it; can touch their noses with their tongues; and can sing the Cream O' Wheat song. I'm a Bills' kid through and through.

7. John taught me about “Treatment X,” which was the most effective punishment ever devised! The conversation probably went something like this:

John: I hate to do it, but you’ve bullied Pat for the last time! Now you’re really going to get it!”

Clare: I wasn’t bullying Patti! She deserved it, and she’s just being a tattletale. (Read in whining, defensive tones.)

John: It’s “Treatment X” for you, Claw-baby!

Clare: What’s Treatment X? (more whining noises)

John: That’s the beauty of it. You’ll never know what to expect, or when, or where. You’re going to be there, awake in your bed at night, worrying that your closet door is going to open and Treatment X will come out to get you. Or maybe you’ll be playing dolls with your friends. Suddenly you get a cold, sick pain in your stomach because your favorite doll is missing! You’ll wonder if that’s what Treatment X is all about. Who knows? Treatment X might happen at school. Your homework papers might mysteriously disappear. Just imagine the embarrassment and terror of having Mrs. Hurd yelling at you about it in front of the whole class! Yeah, Treatment X is the worst thing that can happen to you, because you’ll be thinking about it all the time, worrying about it, wondering what it is and when it’s going to hit. Too bad YOU’RE gonna get it, Clare the Bear!

Clare: In absolute terrified silence, slinks away.

John: Laughs wickedly, as No-Longer-Bullied Patti smiles and runs the other way. John was right about one thing. “Treatment X” has always been on my mind, and still is.

### **Other Early Childhood Memories**

Christmas memories are tops on the list of my childhood favorites. On Christmas Eve, Patti and I were allowed to sleep in John’s bedroom. It’s probably more correct to say we would stay in John’s bedroom. I doubt that much sleeping occurred on Christmas Eve! I would plan and prepare for it far in advance by stocking up on penny candy to share and stashing books and games under John’s bed.

John would entertain us with stories of past Christmases- the lump of coal in the toe of a sock, hearing reindeer on the roof, almost catching Santa at work in our living room. It has been more than fifty years, and when I go into John’s old bedroom, I can still hear him sharing his Christmas stories.

Having a horse of my own was my number one desire. While I never got my wish, John did the best that he could to see that I got to do some occasional horseback riding. To the west of our home was a horse corral. Horses were brought by train to the corral. They remained there until a local slaughter yard sent trucks to carry them away to their horrible fate. I spent many hours at the horse corral, feeding the horses leaves, weeds, and grass; petting those who came close to the fence; and dreaming of being a real cowgirl.

I was not allowed to ever go into the corral alone when the horses were there. My parents must have trusted John’s judgment about the temperament of horses, and also had confidence with his horse handling skills. Because when John was with me, it was okay for me to bend the rules and

go for a horseback ride. John would select just the right horse, add a rope halter and reins and set me on the back of the horse. There wasn't much space in the crowded corral for any of the horses to do much moving, and most of the sick or aged horses didn't want to go anywhere, anyway. But when John helped me get on a horse, the wooden corral fencing would melt away, and "my" horse and I would gallop together across a meadow of clover, wild, free, and in heavenly bliss. Thank you, John, for those wonderful happy memories.

**1962 to 1972**  
**Hang Down Your Head, John Dooley**  
**or**  
**You're SO Cool!**

I was twelve and John was seventeen when I began to see my older brother in a new light. I was looking forward to the promising adventures and privileges of becoming a teenager. John took part in a skit or road show at mutual. The skit was a spoof on a song that was popular, "Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley." I remember hearing the audience laughing, cheering and talking about how great John was. Everyone there seemed to be his friend and fan. I heard people using the words "neat," "groovy," and "beta," (the current words for popular,) and they were all directed at John.

That was a turning point for me. John became someone I wanted to be like. I watched him carefully to see what it was that he said and did that made him such a favorite with his peers. Mom and Dad were very proud of John's achievements in school and in Church. I tried harder in those areas, too.

John's girlfriend and future wife was a role model for me during my teen years. I watched John during his courtship years with admiration and a tinge of envy! He and Joyanne were my idea of the perfect couple.

**"How I Spied on John and Joyanne During Their Dates"**  
**Or**  
**You Never Know Who is Looking Over Your Shoulder!**

I discovered some wonderful places in our home where I could crouch undetected when playing indoor hide-n-seek with Patti and friends. One of those places was a space in the basement between the brick chimney and furnace. The back side of a couch formed a shield on the third side, and the dark shadows around the fruit room hid the entrance. It was an ideal secret space.

I learned that I'd also found the perfect hideout for spying. The couch faced the television set, and my "victim," usually Patti, was too engrossed in the show on t.v. or the game she was playing with her friends to know I was there gathering information. Later in the day, I'd amaze her by having a "vision" where I could repeat things she'd said and done that morning.

When I was about twelve, there was an evening t.v. program that I was not allowed to watch. It was called Nightmare and featured movies like Frankenstein and The Werewolf. John and

Joyanne sometimes enjoyed a date at home in front of the television set. I wanted to catch a glimpse of "The Blob" and "The Clutching Hand," scary t.v. characters I'd heard about but never seen, and so occasionally sneaked to my hideout to see what John and Joyanne were watching.

I don't remember anything about what I saw on the television screen those times that I spied, but I do remember a lot about watching John and Joy themselves. I marveled at Joy's beauty, sweetness, and cute sense of humor. I listened to the things she'd say that would make John laugh or respond with a compliment for her. I watched John put his arm around her and give her a hug or rest his head on her shoulder. I remember tender, sincere, and appropriate affection. There wasn't a lot of mushy kissing that made me feel uncomfortable, though. I admired their relationship, and truly wanted to be just like Joy and to have a boyfriend just like John.

I talked with John recently about my snooping when I was a preteen. I learned two important things when John responded. He laughed and said, "It's a good thing I never did anything I shouldn't have done." First, I learned that John didn't know until that moment that I'd been there monitoring his dates. I must have been an OUTSTANDING spy! John is one sharp guy, and to have successfully accomplished my mission on at least three different occasions is a real feather in my cap.

Second, I had never considered the possibility that I might have seen or heard something that was inappropriate or embarrassing. It's just inconceivable. John treated Joyanne with respect at all times. Her standards were virtuous, and consistent. In other words, I don't believe they would have done anything differently had they known I was standing quietly in the shadows behind them. John and Joyanne enjoyed an ideal courtship, and set an amazing example for their posterity.



John, Joyanne, Clare and Glen Watts

In July 2008, I talked about this memory with Patti. She admitted that she'd done some spying of her own from that same hiding place. She has memories of watching John, too. You just never know who is looking over your shoulder!

While John was on his mission to the Navajo people, our family went on vacation to see him. What an eye-opener life on the reservation was for me! It had never occurred to me that people living so close to home could have such a different life style. We spent a day with a Navajo family who lived in a mud hogan. They had no phone or tv set. I don't even think they had electricity. We had dinner with them, and sat on the ground on goatskin mats while eating fry

bread, lamb stew, and Kool-aid. The lives of the Navajo people were very poor and simple, and yet they were completely content. I can understand why John enjoyed serving them on his mission. The love and respect went both directions. Everyone we met expressed having the highest regards for Elder Bills and had stories to share of the great things he had done for them or taught them.

**1985**

### **Just Like Your Father**

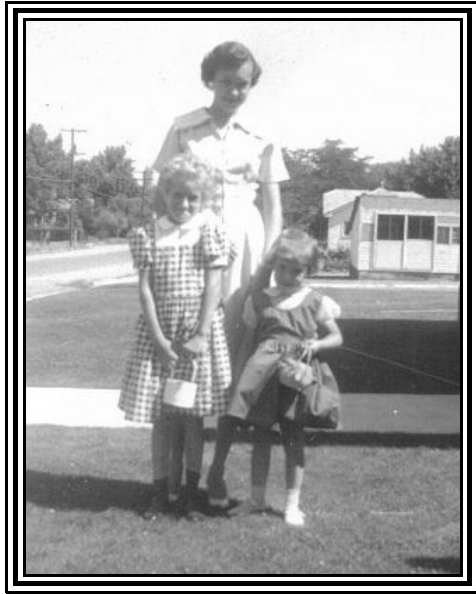
Dad passed away January 9th, 1985. John was one of the speakers for Dad's funeral service. The bishop of Dad's ward, Richard I. Crapo was conducting the meeting, and gave the closing remarks. He said that people often told him, "You are just like your father." I thought that nothing truer had ever been said. I know Bishop Crapo and his father well, and they are spitting images in appearance and character. Then Bishop Crapo turned and addressed John directly. "You," he said, "are just like your father." Then Bishop Crapo talked about Dad's remarkable character and his life of service.

Again, I looked at John with new eyes. He looks very much like Dad. He is a loving, devoted father and husband; is a hunter and fisherman to the core; is quick to laugh at a good joke; and is the most honest person I know. His life has been the kind of life Dad lived. In Mother's final years of life, John gave her the same loving care and consideration that Dad would have done if he'd been here to take care of his Frannie. Everything that I can say about Dad, I can say about my brother John. It's true. He's just like his father! – Clare Ostler

**Patti Jean Bills**



Patti was nine years younger than I was. She was a cute little toddler who liked to follow her big brother around and try to mimic my crazy antics. She was really proud of herself when she could touch her nose with her tongue to prove she was “Johnny’s kid sister!” She loved to follow us around and my friends and I probably teased her way too much.



Clare, Frances and Patti

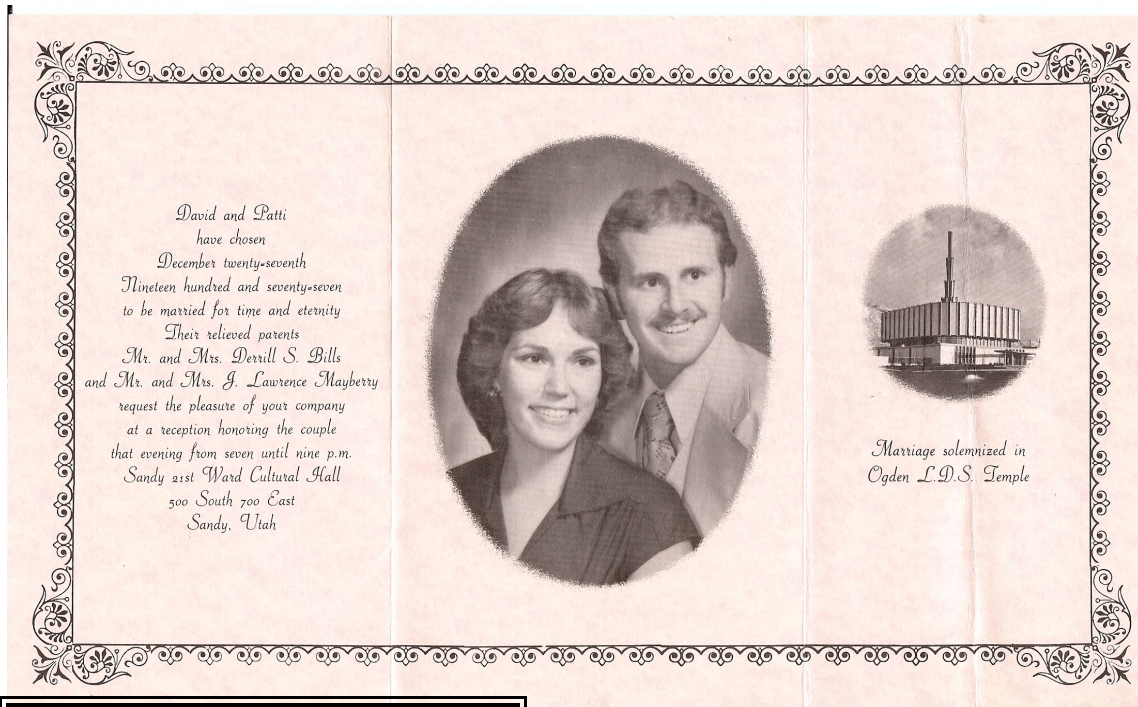
wonderful for loving, teaching, saving, and even teasing!

Patti was only ten when I left on my mission and what a surprise for me to see how she grew up while I was gone for two years! I was married by the time Patti was a teenager.

Patti had joined me in a daily trip to the corral to feed my calf, Joe. We took some time out to prosecute another attack on the yellow jacket colony in a hole near Joe’s corral. I had done everything I could to exterminate those vicious, aggressive insects; I tried blowing them up with fire crackers; drowning them with water; and on that particular day, I think we tried burning them out with gasoline. The yellow jackets came out buzzing mad, and we high-tailed it for home. Patti says I yelled for Mom to open the door and then made a couple extra dashes around the house to give her a chance to get inside safely. I think by the time that I finally got in the house, I must have been stung at least six or seven times. Little sisters are



Abt 1960: John, Bus holding Jeff, Kay, Karren, Frances with Clare and Patti in Easter Bonnets. (Shauna was not born for 4 more years!)



**Cheryl's comment:** John grew up protecting little girls—his sisters, Clare and Patti. Is it any wonder that he dedicated his life and his career to protecting children and especially little girls? As a man, he has associated with many girls and women and gained the admiration of all with whom he has worked and served. John is never inappropriate in any way. Our 3 ½ years of dating attest to that. Once I met John, I was not the least bit interested in anyone else. He knows how to make a woman feel like a queen while showing the greatest respect for her at all times and in all places. The scriptures ask, “Who can find a virtuous woman?” I submit, that if all men were and ever would be, like John Derrill Bills, that would never be a problem. He is a man who guards virtue. One of my biggest surprises once we were married was what a passionate man he was! And my gratitude grew that he kept all that passion in check until the appropriate time!

## Memories of Your Little Sister, Patti:

John was the ideal big brother. He was about eight or nine years older than me and I truly worshiped him. He would always come to my aid whenever Clare was picking on me, and sometimes when she actually wasn't.

Apparently my tears were pretty convincing. I seem to remember him taking my side more often than he should have. He would defend me when Clare and I would fight. I always cried extra loud if he was around because I knew he would take my side.

He was a "cool teenager" in high school when I was about 7 or 8 years old, and he was my hero. He was popular with lots of friends and was a track star. I always felt so lucky when he would let me tag along a little bit. Some of his friends called me "Tank." I didn't realize it was not a compliment. I think John told me it was because army tanks were really strong. I was flattered that they even talked to me.

I had big crushes on all his friends, especially Artie Parker, who would stop at our house on the way to school and would play a two-fingered version "Sentimental Journey" on the piano while he waited for John to get ready.

He could touch his nose with his tongue, and for some reason this was a skill I HAD to acquire. I practiced and practiced. I was so proud the day his friends asked me if I was John's little sister and I could show them my neat tongue trick as proof. I practiced SO HARD to be able to do it. I still can. Too bad I didn't put all that effort into a useful skill!

I really did think John was magic. I remember him consulting his "crystal ball" a few times and coming up with some ice cream treats for Clare and me that he had hidden above the duct work down the basement.

He was one of the best parts of Christmas. On Christmas Eve we got to go in his bedroom in the basement and he would tell us about Santa Claus. He would tell us to listen for hooves on the roof, or sleigh bells and as he dramatically described them I really could hear them. Christmas Eve was always better when we crowded into his bedroom.

John had a steer named Joe that he raised for FFA (I think). I loved tagging along as John would go down to the barn to care for him. I think I followed John every chance I got. One time we were



Kay holding Patti, Frances and Karren, Bus; John and Clare

down there and John found a nest of Yellow Jackets or some of their relatives, in the ground. John got some fire crackers and blew up the nest. He warned me to start running before he even lit the fuse. I heard the explosion and then John yelling, "Run, Pat, Run!" He came flying past me with a whole swarm of angry insects on his tail. He beat me to the house, but did not go inside. He kept running around the yard until I was safely inside. I remember he somehow got me safely in the house without my getting stung. I don't remember if he was so lucky.

He was a great story-teller. I was convinced that he had magical powers. He would tell us he had a crystal ball and I always believed him. Once he made fudge sickles appear almost out of thin air. He may have stashed them above the duct pipe downstairs a few minutes before, but I can't be sure.

I loved hearing about his hunting and fishing adventures. I begged to go along, and one time John relented and let me tag along duck hunting. It was miserable! I remember being cold and wet and having to walk farther than I had ever walked in my entire life. I was happy to just enjoy his stories after that.

Family chores were always more fun because John was there. We did things like husking corn from Tolman's and getting it ready for the freezer, and my favorite- butchering and plucking chickens. I hated the smell of the wet feathers, as they dipped the chickens in boiling water, but it was very exciting when John and Dad would cut their heads off and the chickens would flap around headless. We also made lye soap, and bottled homemade root beer. Even household chores were more fun when John was involved. We went to the Ute drive in and went fishing on our dad's boat, Mickey.

John was such an amazing runner. Our family used to participate in the Easter egg hunt in the hills above Sandy. I think it was put on by the American Legion. They would sometimes give out live chicks and bunnies if you found a specially marked egg. Once John came across a jackrabbit and he chased it. I don't remember if he ever caught it, but I know he was FAST!

I loved visiting him while he was serving his mission on the Navajo reservation. I think the town we visited was Shonto, AZ and we had a meal of mutton stew and fry bread in a real hogan. I remember how the people there loved and respected him. He knew the trading post owner and we got to see all the beautiful turquoise jewelry he kept locked up, and the goat skin rugs, and hand-woven rugs and pottery. John was really blessed in learning the Navajo language and knew a lot about the culture. I remember when Dad was doing some yard work after John returned, and John entertained us with some Indian chanting as he helped spread the fertilizer on the lawn.

He was a great big brother growing up. He was so fun to grow up with! I am glad you asked about John. I was thinking about him today and I'm so glad he married you!!



## Jeffrey Tennant Bills



John, Frances, Bus, Jeff

Jeff was born when I was 12 ½ years old, and more interested in fishing, hunting, and girls than in babies. However, it was nice to finally have a little brother and I always tried to be a good example for him and enjoyed him immensely as he grew up. We have had many great times together as the years have passed. I especially treasure the times we have been able to go fishing rabbit hunting and bird hunting together. Some of those memorable trips included Dad and Shauna. (See story of Shauna getting her first pheasant as an example.)

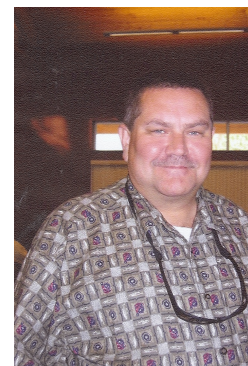


Jeff and John

In the fall of 2005, we got together for a day of fly fishing and float tubing on Daniel's Reservoir, west of Malad, Idaho. We hooked some large, wiley, and very strong fish before the afternoon tornado came up to drive us ashore and dampen our spirits. That's an activity we hope to get together again for, but in the meantime, we enjoy swapping fish stories, scout leader experiences, and grand parenting stories at family reunions and get togethers. Jeff is an accomplished fly fisherman, scout, and a veteran of law enforcement and security guard work. I admire Jeff's relationship with his grandchildren.

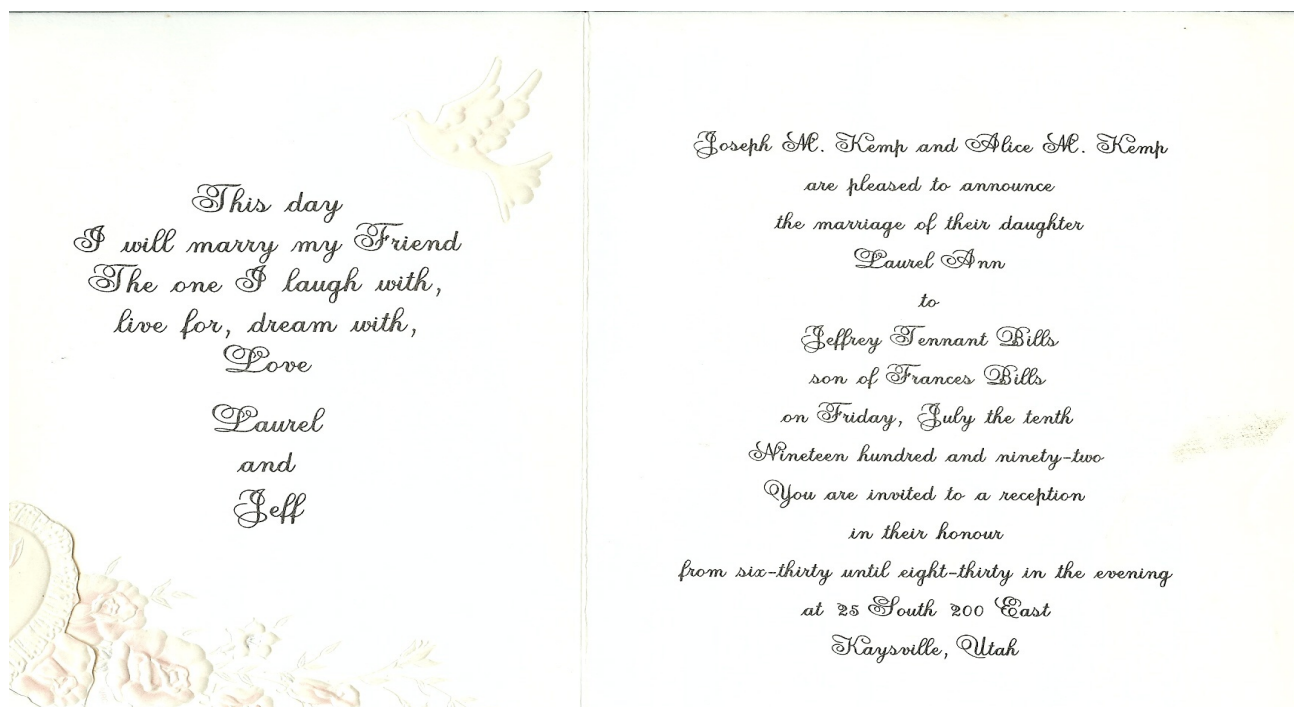


Back: Kay, John, Karren, Jeff; Front: Shauna, Frances, Clare, Patti



Jeff Bills





### **Memories of your only Brother!**

I have many fond memories of my older brother John. They go back to when he was in high school. I remember bumming around with him & his friends, Arty Parker, Glen Watts, Richard Utley and others. The hot spot was the A&W located on State street. I was so cool; I was a teenager before my time.

John then went on a church mission; we went down & visited him in Arizona on the Indian reservation. We ate dinner with a Navajo family in the Hogan. They had mutton stew, with cabbage in it. I also bought a sheep skin at the trading post in Shonto, and I learned a lot about the culture. It was a fun trip, but remember I was happy to get home.

After John returned home from his mission, he went to school at BYU & joined the National Guard. He lived in Orem/Provo area while attending school. I was invited down occasionally & would fish the Provo river or hunt ducks by Utah lake.

There were many rabbit hunts in Mona area & Faust. I quickly learned John's tactics. He would always be on the end of the line, this was so that he could chase down the jack rabbits that were out of range and he did... On the other hand my dad would sit on the road & shoot them when they crossed or sit at a high point & let them come to him. I would run to cut them off at the pass & then hopefully wait for them. Which was a compromise of both tactics.

Our Dad took up reloading shotgun shells in his retirement years. He would tell us that he had all the shells we could shoot. John and I became very deadly shots when it came to trap. I remember many times I had a sore shoulder and jaw, from shooting so much, but it was a blast. We would throw trap into the wind, they would come back at you and you either had to shoot it or be ready to duck, we called these Kamikaze's. Later on, we found shotgun shells that had 2 and 3 times the gun powder and fire would blow out of your barrel and you found yourself dusting yourself off. Sometimes there was no gun powder and the BBs would just roll out of your barrel. Man it was so much fun and really intense, because you didn't know what to expect. However after a few damaged shotguns, John decided someone was going to get seriously hurt, I agreed and we used store ammo from then on, and YES they did hate us at Turkey shoots.

I played countless hours of Frisbee & shooting hoops (this was something I might actually beat him at) with my brother.

I remember the trips to Idaho & fishing. My brother was a resident with the Henry's Fork in his back yard (How cool is that), exchanging fish stories, fly patterns, fly fishing tactics and the time spent practicing our casting on the grass.

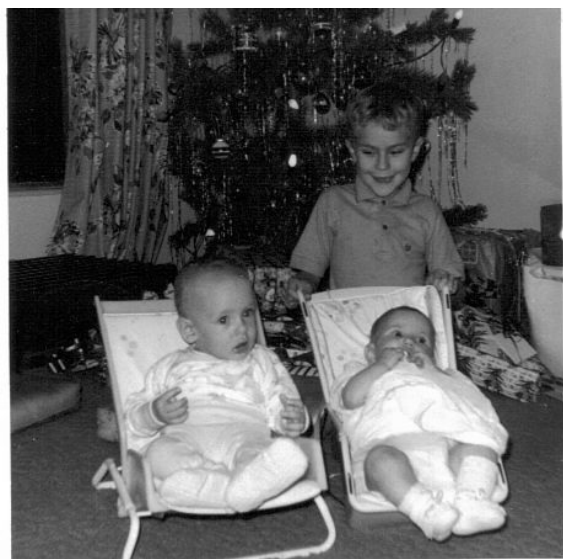
My brother has always been more than a good friend, mentor, coach. He was a good example to me. This is why I chose him to be my chaperone when I got sealed to my wife in the Bountiful temple.

Love your brother Jeff



Jeff

## Shauna Frances Bills



Shauna was born 3 Aug 1964; I left for the mission home on 23 Aug 1964. Shauna was one month younger than my first nephew, Kay's son, Regan Howell.

Although I was not much a part of Shauna's childhood, as she got older, she was such a fun little sister! Shauna was my kid-sister who liked to hang around with her big brother whenever I was around, she was interested in hunting and fishing and other sports. I had the opportunity of taking her out fishing at Strawberry Reservoir and rabbit hunting down in Vernon, Utah and playing lots of baseball and football-toss games in the yard with her. She even came up to Idaho to go fishing with me on Henry's Lake. She was really interested in sports and I enjoyed filling my father's role as an older brother and father-figure for her.

Regan Howell, Shauna and Jeff Bills

One day I took her hunting rabbits down at Vernon during the pheasant season. We saw a rooster pheasant running down a ditch line and I sent her after it. Somehow, she managed to jump that pheasant and shoot it—a big beautiful, Chinese Ring-neck! She couldn't have been more proud and I couldn't have been more proud of her.

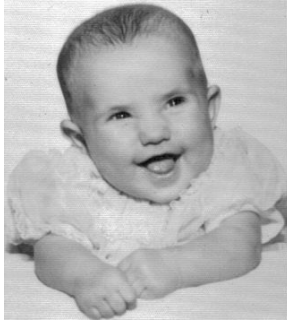


Bills Family at time of Shauna's birth: Mike Heinecke, fiancé of Karren, Karren, Joyanne, fiancé of John, Clare, Patti, Frances holding Shauna, Jeff. John is on his mission. Kay is married and a new mother of a son.



Shauna and John at Jade's reception. 2001





Shauna age 4



Shauna and Dad at Ricks College Grad



Shauna

My Kid Sister, Shauna

Who is this curly haired, cheerful surprise come so late  
to a shocked mom, almost forty-eight.  
Your parents prayed to hang on and see you graduate.

Talented, modest, compliant, and so eager to please  
You kept Mom and Dad young, and lifted your siblings  
to their knees.

Though definitely not too tall,  
You could run, and catch, and hit the ball.

Your optimism inspired, your persistence endured  
You elevated friends, family, and team-mates across  
the board.

You shot the  
pheasant and  
caught the fish

You were the kid sister of my every wish.

And when you donned a dress for that special date,  
We realized that as a student, a citizen, and person,  
You were also first rate.

In Mom's recent years. you have been her cherished and reliable support.  
Nothing displaced your shared Tuesdays, neither vacation nor court.

May your quiver be filled, and your fishing rod retain its bend  
Thanks for being my kid sister and friend



Shauna

Your Brother, John

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Facing Forward, Looking Back

There is an inner strength within you  
Forged by those who've gone before  
There is faith, and hope, and courage  
Brought to you from distant shore.

Please take time to read our stories  
Our blood runs through your veins—  
We trod the path; prepared the way  
Now you must take the reins!

Face forward, daughter—  
We stand behind—cheering you on  
There is an inner strength within you  
From those you thought were gone!

—by Cheryl Bills



## Shauna's Memories of John:

"Yah Ta Eh" my Brother!!!

I came along a little later in life, so I missed growing up in the home with you, but there is plenty to reflect on! So many life experiences, so much knowledge, and so many hours filled with your laughter!!!  
"BY THE TREES!!!"

A recent fishing trip to a lake on the Ute Tribe reservation gave me time to sit and really go over these things. To get to Twin Pots, you have to travel on tribal land. You stay on the road and do not stop! This brought memories of you telling about your experiences working with the Navajo people. Some of those experiences were scary! I learned from you to honor and respect other people's beliefs and traditions! There was a stone house that set in the shadow box in the front room that was a reminder of these things.

After finding the "right spot" to fish, it came time to rig up the pole. More memories came flooding back as I tied the hook on. Dad had a little metal tackle box that had a bunch of illustrations on knots to tie. It was my Big Brother that taught me this nifty knot that held better than all of those! *"You go around, around, around...and through the loop at the bottom. Pull it tight...remember to clip the end close 'cause those big, smarter fish will see it."*

Casting in and letting it set, you have time to look around and take in the scenery. I remember a fishing trip with you and Jeff. You took us out on the Snake River in your new "John Boat." What a NEAT trip! There was wildlife...beautiful scenery...and never ending TRUE fish stories!!!! That trip you tried to teach me about how to set the hook at just the right time. I didn't catch anything, but had the time of my life!!!

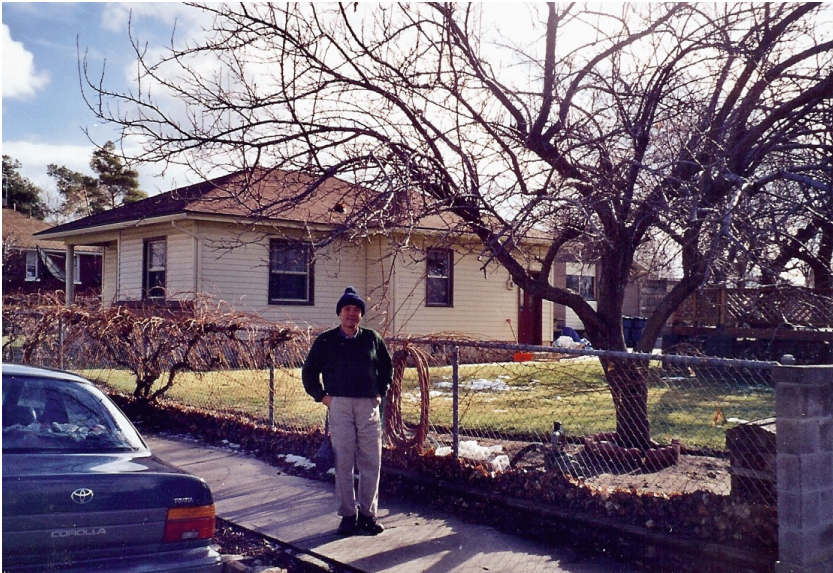
This brought me to a memory of a family picnic we had at the Sugar City Park by the church. It was just after the Teton Dam broke...I remember you got out your fly fishing pole. All of your children, the nieces and nephews, Sugar City kids and I became a big school of fish! We "swam" around the grassy field and you would cast your line, trying to "catch" us. You are so graceful! You could just flick that line out and land it right on our heads!! Your words of *"practice, practice..."*

Another favorite memory has to do with hunting and trap shooting! I remember many times when your high school friends, especially Glenn Watts and Eddy Parker would sit in the kitchen as you talked about your day's adventures! Laughter was always involved. And you would bring me home the tails from Jack Rabbits! I don't think Mom was real excited...but I sure was!!!

Remember trap shooting? And using dad's infamous reloaded shells? The ones that had more kick than a magnum? The ones that had wadding and nothing else? (Ya know? I don't think Dad ever told anyone that he would let me help sometimes...those could have been my fault!) Soooo many memories...John? Just want to tell you.....I love you! —Shauna

## Childhood Homes

This is the house where I grew up. This is the apple tree from which we picked apples, poked fire crackers into the worm holes and then threw the apples as high and far as we could to watch them explode in mid-air.



John in front of house he grew up in before brick home was built.

room in the basement and helped put up all the ceiling board in the basement. We finished the gun closet downstairs. It was in this home that I learned to shoot by shooting mice. The only rooms that were finished when I was still home was my room, the gun closet, and the bathroom. We had our TV in the cement wall part of the unfinished basement.

Just south-east of this house on the same block was where my Grandpa and Grandma Tennant lived for many years. The brick home we built is on the north west corner of this same block where some of Grandpa Tennant's chicken coops were. This picture was taken from the driveway at the north east corner of our brick home. The cinder block fence separates these two homes. I was 14 when we built the brick home.

My father's friend and neighbor, Earl Morris, was the contractor who built our brick home. I helped finish off my



Next to the western most tree just beyond the left side of this picture is buried my marble collection in a tin erector-set box.





Dad in front of new brick house at 611 South 200 East; Sandy, UT –address has changed. Clare and Lynn Ostler now live in this home I grew up in.



My Grandparents: Dora and John Tennant by their new home in Crescent, UT after they sold their home adjoining our older home in Sandy.



2000 Family Reunion: Kay, Patti, Frances, Karren, Jeff  
Clare, Shauna, John

## Joyanne's Record of their Dating Days – With Love Notes from John:



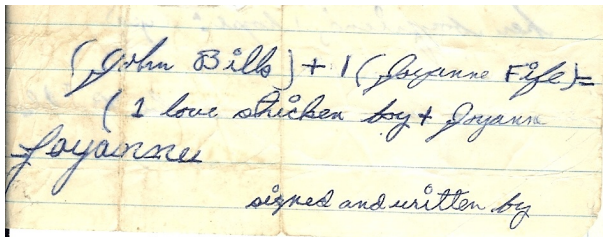
Johnny Bills

Johnny and I met in September of 1960 when I was still a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Midvale Jr. High School and Johnny a Sophomore at Jordan High School. Lynette Orgille, one of my girlfriends, moved to Sandy and thus became a member of the ward Johnny belonged to. One Sunday she invited me over and I went to Sunday School with her and there met Johnny. At first sight, I really liked Johnny. He called on me to say the closing prayer, which embarrassed me, but was glad he noticed me.

We began seeing a little of each other. He came over to some of our matinee dances and watched me skip the rope with my PE class at the Gym Jamboree. He and Artie Parker, on several occasions, rode the bus from Sandy to Midvale to see me and my girlfriend, Becky. I remember one time they came dressed alike and they really looked cute. A couple of times I rode my bike over to Lynette's house then we would ride around Johnny's house trying to secretly see him.

In October, I went with Lynette to Mt. Jordan Junior High's (Sandy) Halloween Dance. Johnny came with another girl, but I couldn't keep my eyes off him. It was one of the funnest dances I had been to. I got to dance a couple of dances with Johnny and Artie told me that Johnny liked me. I remember Johnny picked up a pumpkin and tossed it at me. I couldn't believe that he liked me!

I graduated from Junior High in May of 1961, and then during the school year 1961-62, Johnny and I attended one year together at Jordan High School. He walked me to classes, we went to games and dances together.



Joyanne's diary excerpts:

Jan 1, 1961

Man I had a blast last night! Johnny Bills (my boyfriend) took me to a New Year's Eve party. Wow! I like him! He's so neat!!! He's got the cutest personality. Lynette and Eddie and Becky and Artie (blind dates) went with us. I've been to 5 other dances so far (with him). After the dance we went over to Johnny's and played records. It was so fun! Lynette and Becky slept with me that night. We got home around 2:30. I could hardly get up the next morning. Lynette had to go home early, but Johnny and Artie came over on the bus and we went bowling with them. He's a neat bowler! He scored 179. I won't say mine!

(Jan 2) I've had so much fun lately.

Johnny's really popular over at Jordan. I love the way he looks at me at times. All my girlfriends that know him say his personality is so cute. (I agree!) I wish Johnny would call. I love him.

I helped him in his campaign for Boys State and he won. He ran track that year and was really fast. I remember in his welding class, he welded my initials out of metal.

That year Johnny and I became King and Queen of the Sweetheart Ball, Saturday February 17, 1962, which was really special for us. That school year holds very many special memories for us.

*Joyanne Fife*  
*from a friend on Bleethin*  
*end of the class*



27 Oct 1961 Dog Patch Drag Dance

*her boyfriend I hope. (yes)*  
*John Bulls*

Joyanne's diary excerpts:

Jan 5, 1961: Today I decided that if Johnny ask me to go steady with him I'd have to turn him down. I'd really like to, but that's the breaks. I just can't. I promised myself I wouldn't until I was older. I hope he doesn't ask me. I "like" Johnny so much.

Jan 7: Man what a neat day. It was so fun. Johnny and Artie looked so cute. They had on white sweaters and shirts alike. They really looked neat. Artie told me Johnny wanted me to go steady with him and wanted me to take his ring. I wanted to say yes, but I didn't. I told him I just couldn't. After bowling we came over to my house and then we walked Becky all the way home. Artie slipped the ring in my purse so I have it, but not steady.

Jan 8. (Tonight at a fireside) I asked Boyd (Price) if he knew Johnny. He said everyone knew him! He said we should double date sometime. I wish Johnny would call.

Jan. 9. No call from Johnny. My song for today is: "Are you lonesome tonight?" Yes, darn it!!

Jan 20: Shoot, maybe Johnny doesn't like me anymore. He hasn't called for the longest time. I like him so much. Why doesn't he call? That's what I keep asking myself. I'm so blue! I guess maybe he doesn't like me any more. Sigh— it was too good to be true, I guess. "HE MAKES ME SO MAD AND BLUE!!!! But I still love him to bits though. Shoot!

Jan 21: Lynette called and told me Johnny still likes me. She said he's going to call and ask me to the Gold and Green Ball. I can't wait!!!

*Joyanne Fife*

*Joyanne Fife, you are so sweet.*  
*I just know you can't be beat.*



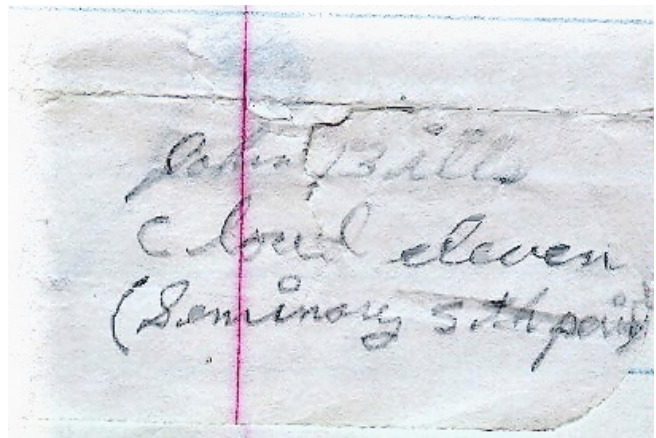
*You're the most killereest' girl ever known  
For you my love has grown and grown.  
You are so young and nice and kind,  
Another so great, you could not find.  
I want to have you for my very own  
And make the other boys leave you alone.*

Your love is one that makes me tingle with excitement and compassion. You are an inspiration when I become depressed. You try so hard to make me happy that I feel like a heel. I want to be nice to you but its really hard cause I'm a Dip. When I think about how nice you are to me and how mean I can sometimes be, it makes me cry because you're nice and I'm not.

Gol, Joyanne, you really are wonderful and have really fine standards which I hope I can someday learn to live up to. I am glad that you are so modest and although you frustrate me, I will always love and respect you. I think more of you than I do my sisters or of anyone else in the whole world except my Mom. I'm glad you're not forward like Lynette. If you were, I probably would have never liked you. I'm glad you're not a dip, even though I am. I hope I can be like you someday.

At night I cry myself to sleep because I am in love with such a wonderful girl. John

PS. Gol, how will I ever be a hermit with you as a girlfriend? Ummmmmmmmmm. You kill me.



---

<sup>1</sup>Wonderful

P.S. I wish the rules boys never saw

Joeyanne

This is a cheesy note from a class you know. Ersh, I wish you'd get busy and find out what the rest of the male world is like. I can't stand it already. I sit on one end of the bleachers and watch you on the <sup>this</sup> end. Gee, what a way to spend 7th period, (sports). I have to hide from you in the halls to keep you out of my nervous system.

In the assembly, I almost died when I saw you give him <sup>(person)</sup> your sugar-sweet smile, but that's the purpose of this crazy venture. Keep it up.

The only thing that's good about this, is that I can get my hair cut, and not feel that it matters how horrible or cute you think it is. P.S. I've gone anti-girl + it's lots of fun teasing them.

P.S. I know a close relative of mine who sat home the last two nights, thinking about all the fun he's had with you, (you're really wonderful) and trying to figure out what's so wrong with falling in love with you.

signed - John Hope-less - - - - - Ideas

Joeyanne  
I hope  
you're  
having  
a  
great  
time  
on  
the  
bleachers



# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

Joyanne Fife

This is the only paper I have, so I hope you understand. I even used this stuff for my research paper. Tonight I got to thinking how I treated you the other night, and then I didn't even see you today. Well, I'm a real idiot. I hope you don't think so though.

Joyanne, no matter what you sometimes might think, I would never hurt you or make you mad, at least not on purpose. You're too nice to ever be treated like that. I really like you and I hope that if you ever decide that you like another boy, that he's really a nice boy and worthy of such a wonderful girl. I'm really lucky to have a girlfriend like you. I know know that I surely don't deserve you. That is the only reason I ever questioned the "going together of you and I". If you think I'm not completely hopeless, it would be worth the effort to become more worthy of you. Joyanne, I really love you. I love you so much, but I've never been in love before and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I cry because you're so wonderful.

You seem to be growing up suddenly, I hope you don't grow up too fast and get tired of me. Every day it seems like I like you more; so this is love, it's exciting isn't it.

The Easter Bunny

2 cc.

no added

from John  
Bills





Jan 28, 1962

Dear Johnny,

Tonight was wonderful. You, Eddie and Lynette came over and had a snowball fight with me. Then we went and had a root beer. After you took Lynette and Eddie home, we went to church together at my ward. Afterwards we went to Merlenes and had cake and ice cream. When you took me home, you put your arm around me and told me there were only 3 things that you were thankful for: your mom and dad, the church and for me. I was thrilled. I wanted to tell you all the things I felt in my heart towards you, but I never did.

You are really the most wonderful boy I've ever known. We've had many experiences together that are wonderful. I'm only 15 ½ now, quite young for feeling this way about a boy. You're only 16.

I hope someday that we will be married in the temple for time and eternity. That we will have a love that will grow and grow each time we're together. But first I hope that you will be able to fulfill your dreams of going in the army for 4 years and then going on a mission. I hope that you will keep these ideals and I know I will be beside you all the way. You're the first boy that has ever kissed me, and I'm happy, (That was about ½ year after liking each other.) You're the first boy who told me he loved me, too.

I know you really have the standards of the boy I would want to marry. One thing I like about you is your love and faith for the church of God, the Heavenly Father, and for the wisdom you have.

I think we would have a love as great as anyone or body would have, together with our faults. I can just see us and our children lined up beside us in church. Maybe that is sort of dumb, but I know that together we could go on and on to church. Maybe I feel that way because of my mom and dad. They're really wonderful, both of them, but somehow they seemed to stray from the Church and at the same time from their love for each other. I never want that to happen, never, never. Mona and Byron never go to church; neither does LaRae or Ernie. LaRae might start taking Kevin and going though, but that's not my idea of a happy marriage.

I want a husband who will always love me and that I may love in him the same way. That seems to point the arrow at you in my eyes. I know this must be hard for you to understand but I hope you can understand.

This may sound funny, but I'd like to be just like your mother. You treat her with so much respect; that makes me proud of you. I read somewhere that the way a boy treats his mother will be the same way he treats his wife. If that's true I know I will have a wonderful husband.

Life is funny, I guess. I don't quite understand it, maybe that's the way it should be, but I do know I love YOU, the church, and my parents and all those things in which the Lord has blessed us with.

I hope that I may be able to continue my high school with the standards I now have and with the wonderful boyfriend I have. Maybe you aren't the boy who was meant for me to marry. Maybe better, you were. I guess time is the only thing that will tell. I hope I have the patience I need to face life. I



hope and pray that someday I can give this letter to you and all the dreams in it has turned out.

You are a very lovely boy, one of God's choice spirits. I know. I hope I can live to your standards. I believe I can. Remember always, no matter what:

I love you more than I could ever tell.

Love,  
Your future wife, I pray,  
Joyanne

---

### Sweetheart Ball

A dance never to forget! On February 17, 1962, Johnny and I became the King and Queen of the Sweetheart's Ball held at Jordan High School. It sure a surprise. After the dance, we went to Johnny's and had a party.

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John Bills and Joyanne Fife; Sweetheart Ball 1962  
picture taken in Bills home, Sandy, Utah

believe it was the summer of 1962 that y, Merlene (a girlfriend) and I hiked up nogos Mountain. What a hike! We set out day-break and took sack lunches for our all-hike. It was beautiful. Merlene took es along the way. At the top of the ain is a huge glacier at least ½ mile long. climbed around it and stood together less at the top. (The first little ways down almost straight up and down.) Rocks jutted various spots and since it was late summer, we were) young and a little foolish, we d to slide down it on our bottoms. John d it first and went down like a pro. Then it Merlene's and my turn. We were scared s, so we decided to go down together. ne hanging onto the back of me. We were about to chicken out when we went down. both dug our heels in from fright as much as ng. I remember feeling I was being "buried in snow. Then all at once we were rolling bouncing. Half the time we were up in the and half the time on the ground. We were ing like balls. Johnny ran out in front of us to stop us. I went right over his head and

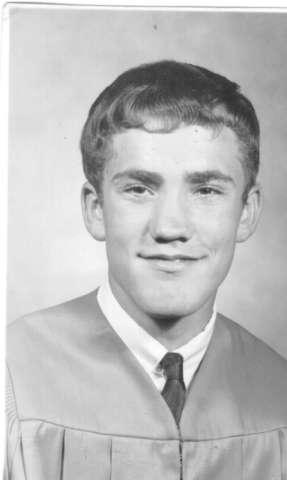
Merlene ran right into him. The roll of film from the camera was strung down the glacier. Luckily none of us was hurt bad. Johnny came out the worst with a cut and bruised leg. We made our way down to the lake that was at the bottom of the glacier to rest and recuperate.

The next school year, Jordan was split and I had to go to the new school, Hillcrest, while Johnny stayed at Jordan for his Senior year. I enjoyed my years at Hillcrest, although it wasn't the same without Johnny.

John graduated from Jordan High School in May of 1963 and I graduated from Hillcrest High School ( a ne wly built school) in May 1964.

Aft er his graduation, John joined the army and was gone 6 months to boot ca mp. He returned and went to school at BYU until he received his mission call on July 30, 1964.

His farewell testimony meeting was held Aug 23 and he was set apart as a mis sionary on Aug 31, 1964. He left for his mission to the Southwest Indian Mis sion, entering the mission home in Holbrook, Arizona. I was heart-broken, but so proud of him.



Jordon High School  
Graduation 1963; John D.  
Bills

Farewell Testimonial

in honor of

Elder

John D. Bills

son of Mr. and Mrs. Derrill S. Bills

prior to his departure  
for the

SOUTHWEST INDIAN MISSION  
of  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

to be held in the

SANDY FOURTH WARD CHAPEL  
500 South 700 East  
Sandy, Utah

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 1964  
6:00 P. M.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Program

Organ Prelude - - - - Shauna Atkinson

Opening Song - - - - Congregation  
"The Lord Is My Shepherd"  
No. 104

Invocation - - - - David Goff

Sacrament Song - - - - Congregation  
"Come, Follow Me"  
No. 14

Sacrament Service - - Aaronic Priesthood

Vocal Solo - - - - Sandra Cook

Speaker - - - - Reed G. Bankhead  
Professor of Religion, BYU

Organ Solo - - - - Charles Naylor

Remarks - - - Bishop Reed W. Anderson

Response - - - - Missionary

Closing Song - - - - Congregation  
"Lord Dismiss Us"  
No. 105

Benediction - - - - Theron Jaynes

Postlude - - - - Shauna Atkinson

ELDER JOHN D. BILLS

Southwest Indian Mission  
Box 936  
Holbrook, Arizona

Enters Mission Home  
August 24, 1964



done for me. I really meant what I said the other night at my house; that I do need you so much, but I was thinking selfishly and unrealistically. I do hope that you will never leave me, but I will promise to understand if you do. There would never be any hate or jealousy in my heart, only love and appreciation for the wonderful outlook on life that you have given me. I do keep hoping that someday we can always be together. I will never regret one moment of your wonderful friendship except for the wrong ways I have treated you. I hope I can always make you happy, but if I can't, I don't want to be a hindrance to your happiness, so don't ever let it be that way.

I has really been great going so many places and doing so many fun things with you. You are very considerate and nice, and lots of fun to be with. I am sorry that I am so mean to you sometimes, honest, I never want intentional to be that way. I want you to really have fun this summer and in college, but don't ever forget me. I hope we can have lots of fun before I go into the service.

John Bills

P.S. I really love you and I will always remember your wonderful self and the wonderful things you have done for me. I hope we will be able to recall our friendship together (and now I hope) when we are about 65 or 80.

Somehow, it feels like Joyanne is rejoicing in these memories with John (age 64) and me as I respectfully and lovingly record their words and dreams together....

Cheryl

## John's Military Experiences

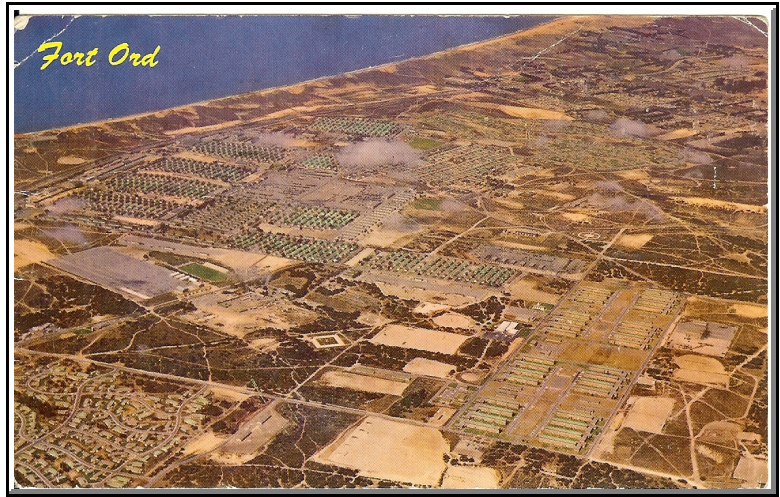
### Excerpts from letters written by John to Joyanne:

#### Fort Ord, California

undated letter: (possibly written when John was at boot camp during the summer following his Senior year of high school)

Joyanne,

I couldn't get this off my mind so I guess I better write it off.



A girl has to be told that she is wanted. She has to be told that she is needed. Everyone likes to know that they are loved. Truly, Joyanne, I love you greatly and I feel so lonely without you. I couldn't see how anyone could need another, but I do now. I want to be with you all the time even though I know I can't. If you only knew how I love you so.

I imagine that you don't take me quite that seriously. I know that I shouldn't be so serious. I know I'm wrong, but I can't bring myself to face it. You're a real wonderful girl, too young and sweet to be so dramatically caught in love as that of ours. I sometimes think that I don't even care what anybody else says. I love you and I want you to love me. I don't even care about anybody else. The reason I don't call you is that I don't want you to feel bound to me, but I wish more than anything in the world that you felt like I do. I agree and I am glad that you don't encourage going steady, but I still wish that we could be together more. If I knew how you felt about the whole business, we would probably both be better off.

Please understand me and help me to understand you more. I think that I can trust and confide in you and I hope that you can trust and confide in me.

John Derrill Bills

postmarked 8 Jun 1963

It is my last night in reception and I had to draw guard –ALL night!! – Tomorrow at 5:30 AM, I get off and then I have to go back to barracks and straighten up. Tomorrow is real busy, too. Boy what a day. I sure miss you and your family. Sure love you lots. I heard a saying once: "Love –absence is to love as wind is to a fire. It extinguishes the small and makes the great grow stronger."

If I had a chance to come home, I would and I would keep you so busy you wouldn't have a chance to even wink at another boy. The army is teaching me discipline so when I come back you better be ready



to be good.

Seriously, I am already starting to see the good that this Army is doing me. I don't like it especially, though. If you will only wait, I will promise you a much more grown-up boy on my return. I could be a lot nicer to you and be more qualified to set an example for you.

Postmarked 17 Jun 1963 Fort Ord, California

Dear Joyanne,

Hello there! Today we had a big inspection and some of the guys had to go on a 20-mile march with full packs filled with sand and 10-pound rifles. Every minute we are busier than bees. One day I was wide awake and paying attention to my instructor and a sergeant put me on a detail cause he thought I was sleeping. The food is good (if you aren't on KP) but you don't get much to eat. We had a fire drill the other day and vacated our barracks in 3 seconds. Everyone down here is getting strep throat, ending up in the hospital. If we miss three days we have to start all over again. By the time you get this letter, I will be on my 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Basic. We just found out that we get post privileges on the first week. This has never been awarded to any basic group before. It was a reward for our efforts. Boy! I sure get chewed out a lot, but I am really trying to do my best. We have another inspection at 3 pm.

You had better come down and visit me or my soul will wither away. I will pay for everything. I think I will be able to get about \$60 for your expenses. The only excuse I will accept is "that your parents say 'Definitely Not.'" I sure will be a sad lonesome boy if you don't come and visit me. I can see that arrangements are made by my parents. We could even go swimming in the ocean. Yea!

Every guy in here tries to boss everybody else. Our squads are not too well organized because squad leaders keep being changed. I hope everything starts to straighten out cause until everyone can start working co-operatively, it is really going to be rough. The feeling here seems to be that of a group of criminals in prison.

After my 8-week basic, I am probably going to Ft. Houston in Texas. I will be home for a week and a half when I leave basic— about Aug 7<sup>th</sup> . Better be around. I sure was glad to get your letter. I was wondering if mine were reaching you.

Whew! I passed inspection. I was really worrying. Wednesday we start out on the rifle range. Our sergeant gets in trouble because we don't do everything right, but he's a great guy and he's really trying.

Wednesday: Tonite everyone is shining his boots and preparing for 4 AM inspection. I should be doing mine, too. Today I got cut across the throat during bayonet practice. We learn to be very mean and aggressive when using them.

It is a mighty lonely feeling when your name doesn't appear at mail call. Please write!! Life down here is OK after a person gets used to it. I called Sunday but no one was home. It was a real disappointment, but just hearing the phone ring and knowing it was there within your very house thrilled my soul.

We get up about 3:50 AM and don't get back to our barracks till about 8:20 PM every day. We practice throwing grenades, we march 10 miles to classes daily and we have PT, drill, bayonet and rifle training.

There is no sun here, so we don't get sunburn. Everyone has a cold known as the Fort Ord Hack. When it isn't too foggy, you can see the stormy sea about 1 mile away. We never get time to get a good look at it.

There is no news down here, we can't have radios, so except for letters, I know nothing but ARMY. You can't imagine the completely different type of life this really is. I must get busy now so be good and remember I love you more since now that I realize what a wonderful person you are. God bless you.  
John

postmarked 24 Jun 1963

My dad sent me some stamps and a \$5 bill. Whoopee!! I am going to talk dad into coming down here and bringing you along. The sergeant said that until Tuesday of the week after next, we don't even get time to breathe; we will have training— firing our rifles during this period. Lights will be out at 10:45 PM and on again at 3:30 AM. We run 5 miles to firing ranges in ½ hour. On Saturday and Sunday, I will be able to write. Today on inspection, our platoon got the highest rating of this company's history. A week ago, though, we recorded the all-time low. Open house is around Aug 6<sup>th</sup>. It covers Fri - Sat – Sun. Be here! Please.....

Today we had a shake-down because someone had a radio. The officers haven't found it yet. I have a picture to send you but it isn't ready yet. If we get caught with any pictures, gum, magazines, or etc. woe unto us. If you come down, it will only be about 2 weeks and a day before we can be together; 4 weeks after that I will be home for about 10 - 12 days; 4 months later, my service will be done.

postmarked 9 July 1963 Fort Ord, California; written "the night you left"

Dearest Joyanne,

I am writing you tonight because I love you so much. I want you to know that you're the greatest gal in the whole world. You have made me very happy. Those wonderful hours we were together were really wonderful (except the part I spoiled). You are the kind of girl that only one in a million could deserve.

I'm going to work my head off to keep that place always as I have now. Joyanne, I love you and I will never forget the love we shared out under the moon last night and this whole wonderful weekend. I am really blessed to have a girl who has such high principals and such a wonderful heart. Gee, Joyanne, I didn't know my big brown eyes were so fascinating!!!

Postmarked 11 Jul 1963

Hello Joyanne, How is civilian life? Army life is fine. Receiving your letter was just like having you here. Every time you write you bring new hope and inspiration to my heart. Its just such a great feeling to read your letters cause they show me what a great kid you are.

We have been playing war! I didn't get killed — but I almost tore my finger off. An ambulance took me to the hospital and I have five stitches sewn. The bottoms of my feet are one big blood blister and I can't even walk so I am on a lawn watering detail today. Saturday we go into the hills for a week but I'll try to write.

Every guy in our company has told me how nice you were and how cute. That's a lot different than they said about most of the girls here. Many thought you were my sister and all were jealous. I do realize how wonderful you are and how lucky I am.

Jackie Gleason was at Fort Ord making a film today.

Postmarked 15 July 1963 (John's birthday)

Good morning, Joyanne, my girl. Are you tired this morning? What are you having for breakfast? Boy! The medics cut those blisters out of my feet and I have big holes there.

I always wanted to go on a mission. Then when I met you, I changed my mind cause I didn't think you'd wait— but now, I want to go — for you — because I love you and I know that we could be so much happier if I went. I have a lot of faith in you and I really believe you would wait. We must have the Lord's blessings upon us to love each other so wonderfully.

There is nothing in the whole world I would do if it might mean my losing you. When you find something I'm doing makes you mad, chew me out. That one letter you sent really shocked me. (I have never recovered) but it might have helped me, too. I know you wrote with good intent.

Isn't it wonderful to be so hopelessly in love? We can be this way forever. I want to marry you so much, but it will be worth it to wait. It will really be thrilling when I get you a ring after my service term. You could marry me for my money. Luckily for you, I gotta go now,

John, the Grease!

postmarked 20 Jul 1963

Fort Ord, California

Dear Wonderful Joyanne,

How are you? I am alive. Tomorrow we head for the Booneys (hills). We have all gear including tents and sleeping bags on our backs. We are going into the hills about 50 miles and won't be back for a week — BUT, there will be mail so ya better write. Guess what treat I'm getting for my birthday? KP on Bivouac — an envied treasure!

Joyanne, remember that New Year's Eve at Lynette's when I kissed you? Boy!!! Every time I think of it I remember how you just knocked me off my feet! Remember the snowball fight we had by that pile of lumber at Lynette's? Remember the night we walked to Becky's and it was so cold?

Joyanne, I love you very much and I want you to always look back and see only good — from now on anyway. I do love you and I do want so very much for us to be together, BUT I read you letter and I don't want you to be lonely. I am beginning to understand the suffering you are going through and it makes me cry because I have such a sincere and such a wonderful girlfriend. No boy could be worth the suffering you are going through. You can have fun. I will be back and we will still love each other. I feel like a bum because my girl is so darn much better than most girls. This is TRUE! BUT — I don't want you romancing or running around with any males. I love ya! By darn, you're the cutest, sweetest and coolest girl in all the west. I want to come home and keep you so busy you will think you've been

through BASIC.

I agree with you about us growing up together and every single day I love you more. Please love me and I will always be the best boy I can for you. Let's both be good for each other cause we're in love. Mush!

Joyanne, you are the nicest girl I will ever meet. Don't suffer but stay with me and I will make you happy (if it kills me) for the rest of your life. In 20 days I'll be home. The other day I got a crazy notion to sneak off down to that park where we were and write you a letter. I never finished cause the MP got me. Heck I'm in trouble.

How's life at home? Tell Susan hi for me. I hope you take good care of your Mom! She's done a great job raising you. The best of all of them! She's just the greatest.

Try and do some fun things so you won't think about me so much, but save your love for me – all mine is for you—my life is for you to make you happy. Your old Army Boy!!! John

PS You're just wonderful and loveable and I love you always. Will write later about a mission. I have always wanted to go on a mission. I don't think I can leave you for two years but I do want you to make sure I go on a mission and that I come back and marry you forever. I am serious. I still am getting you a ring.

We have been throwing hand grenades. Last night we were attacked by tear gas and mustard gas while in bed. Some guys really got messed up. Tomorrow we have close combat. Thanks for the card. At the end of my workday 2 AM Tuesday morning I got you mail. It was a wonderful ending to a hard, depressing day. Knowing that I have such a wonderful girl to love and to love me is the greatest present there could ever be. I miss you IMMENSELY!!



Keep your date bok open for about August 5 and following days and get rested up so we can have a lot of fun and I can make you happy.

postmarked July 22, 1963

Now for Bivouac:

Sunday night we set up camp. On the way to camp we were invaded by enemy small arms fire and gas. Monday was KP. I don't even want to talk about that. Other exciting events were throwing real hand



grenades (Boy they are really powerful, shooting rockets at targets and on Saturday the grand finale – we broke camp at 3 AM and began a hike. We had full packs, helmets, sleeping bags and weapons. Most of the hike was uphill. At noon we had a half-hour rest and then took off again. After 12 hours, we reached the barracks. Our hike took us through the hills behind Carmel and clear to the other side of the mountains—the total distance was around 42 miles. Not one soldier dropped out.

Another exciting day – Thursday– close combat. The mission of each squad was to attack a hill. We got ready. Suddenly the ground blew up right by me and we moved out. Two enemies popped up and I started shooting. My rifle got so hot it was smoking. We rushed again; two more enemies. I shot 10 rounds in about 2 seconds. Suddenly an enemy popped up about 2 yards away. I thrust my bayonet through his throat. At the end of the course, we were reviewed on our accomplishments. If each target was hit twice, we were Expert. Everyone of my enemies had been hit at least 10 times.

## Fort Sam Houston, Texas

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even deserve you a little bit. I trust you and I know you're the nicest girl I could ever meet and I'll always love you for being such a wonderful girl.

postmarked 20 Aug 1963

Dear Joyanne,

I promised you I would tell you about our life, and etc. so here goes. It was really an empty feeling I had as our jet zoomed away from Salt Lake and left me with a hopeful heart and empty arms. We landed at Denver and there we lay around all night waiting for a plane. I wanted to call you right then and tell you how wonderful and good you are and how much I love you and how happy we could be, BUT— I decided to wait for a while. I wish I had called now.

When we landed at San Antonio, it was like a giant oven and the insects are enormous in Texas. We caught a taxi for a dollar and soon we were at Ft. Sam. Fort Sam (Houston— Military Medical school) is a wide open fort and lots of things are always happening. The barracks, the sergeants and even we soldiers look as run down as the Alamo.

We go to school 8 hours a day and we work on barracks details and etc. for about an hour. The rest of the time we work on personal junk, study, and sometimes go to service club, sing, play ball or etc. Really we don't have very much time.

KP or guard comes around every nine days, tests ever week (below 70% recycles a person). We spend hours polishing shoes cause the sun melts the polish off.



metime in August 1963 soon after  
val at Medical School in Fort Sam  
ston, Texas

rest darling Joyanne,  
sure wish you were here. San Antonio  
pretty neat place but it is just hot— and  
at pours off me till I'm all shriveled  
I only weigh 4 ½ pounds. Maybe I  
uld go on sick call.

anne, if you will just behave, I'll make  
a good husband yet. I'm even going to  
sionary meetings so I can be a good  
sionary for you. I promise with all my  
t I'll be very good and the kind of guy  
deserve. You are such a great kid.  
just make me feel horrible cause I  
t you to be so true, but I know I don't

I can't stand it cause you are so far away so I'm trying to keep real busy. I'm going to missionary meetings and I'm in a choir with Doug. We are putting on a play Friday, but I'm being good and doing only what is really good for me.

I got a letter from you today. It was sent to Fort Ord July 30<sup>th</sup>. It says I will be home in six days and you might get a day off. Haha I really am happy for you though cause you have a good job and I'm mighty proud too. We will be happy, happy when we can be together again.

I hope they make rings good now days cause I want to get you the prettiest and the best there is. Still saving. You know there's a gal who means the world to me and its you. It's going to be hopeless to stop me from lovin ya cause I never will, so there. If you are still goin' to that ol "Teen Town" when I get home, I'll just have to straighten you up. I'll be so nice you'll just forget all about it. Even if it takes 40 years! So there!

Joyanne, when we left Salt Lake and flew over, I knew I was leaving a mighty special place and a very special girl. But I knew I'd be back and that might special girl would wait and if you wait, we can go through the temple together.

Did you know you're the biggest, sweetest, most wonderful character there ever was. AND when you kiss me,...WOW! It about kills me and I know the Lord loves you too. You are just cute, too. You're just darling too and such a character and so sweet and kissable!!!

Love ya — from John

PS Sunday I have guard. Its horrible! But I'll think of you and be thankful and happy. Love ya.

postmarked 22 Aug 1963 Fort Sam Houston, Texas

Texas is just big and flat. It just seems to roll off forever. Today I have guard and don't get off till tomorrow morning. For the last 3 nights I was in a mutual production put on by the LDS stake in San Antonio. It was fun – but don't worry cause I'm not flirting with any girls. No reason to, I've already got the Best girl in the world.

So you unjoined Teen Town, huh? What a great surprise. Someone once told me, "No 17-year old girl knows what she wants." I really hoped and prayed you wouldn't like it, but I wouldn't have wanted you or expected you to do it just for me. I know now that you are careful and remember your standards. I really have faith in you. Please tell my mother about unjoining Teen Town. I wrote to her and told her how bad I felt cause you seemed to be going astray. I see now it was my fault and I want to apologize for not being able to understand the situation and for being mad at you. I love you so much and I was really worried. Mom loves you, too, and so does my father and Karren and my other sisters and Jeff. My friends think you're wonderful, too. I'm the happiest and the luckiest guy in the world. Thank you for being such a good example for me.

Feed the rabbits and when I get home, let's go swimming. Really I think your bathing suit was darling and so are you. Here is a big Kiss. SMACK!

Postmarked 29 August 1963

I am in class now down in yonder woods. They remind me of the everglades. I gave a pint of blood and that's all I had. (Found out too late!) We had our first anatomy and physiology test today. I almost goofed! (92%) I am going to church in San Antonio. The people are few in number but they're wonderful and they are always taking us to church and etc.

Postmarked 3 Sep 1963

Dear Joyanne,

How are you tonite? I am a lonely guy. This weekend was Army's payday. We were given passes and are free men till Monday evening. Half of the company is broke already—I am sending my money home now so I won't spend it. (Remember what I am hoping I am saving it for).

School here is like this:

At 5 am we have to be out of bed, get dressed, fix displays, etc.

At 5:30 am we fall out for chow.

By 7:30 am, we have eaten, cleaned barracks, policed the area and are in class. Classroom temperature is about 110 - 115 degrees and its hard to stay awake. We have a 10 minute break per hour.

By 5:30 pm we are free to shine boots (spit shine for every morn), study, and relax a bit. I go to the gym usually. Richard and Doug are always swimming just like you remember them at Monterey. They don't like it here at all.

I got your letter about Art and Susan going to Great Salt Lake and I started thinking about the fun things we used to do and how much fun we had together. I also thought about how I loved your wonderful little heart. I always am wanting to hold you in my arms, but I know that its not always too good cause I want to love you so much. I don't have any resistance.

I'm setting on a bench by a 19 year old kid who's married and has two kids and now he's found out that he has lung cancer and only 4 months to live. It's a horrible thing to realize.

There are girls all over the post but I don't care much cause as long as there is any hope with you, no one or anything will I let happen to create a change and nothing in life means anything to me now except a mission, college, home and parents and especially you and a happy life to share with you. No matter how life's trails may lead, I will always think the world of you and perhaps one of these nights, we will both look up at the same star-filled sky and remember our wonderful love for each other. Sorry I'm so sentimental.

We just had an introduction in Priesthood class. 70% of the priesthood membership is from Utah.

Joyanne, we have so much more to live for than any group of people in the earth today. I hope we make wise decisions always cause it has a lot to do with what we will make of our lives.

Love, John

PS Richard and Dale and Darrel and I will go to the Alamo today. Those guys all have guard tomorrow. Later: Dearest Love, We made it to the Alamo. It was really quaint. San Antonio is a large city and its running over with Air Force boys. The neatest river runs right through the city. We got disgusted with our chauffeur so we walked back to the fort. It took us all day. I am going to see a football game at San Antonio next month after school.



Joyanne, I'm starting to miss you so much, I'm going crazy. I had to get a new pillow. I know if you knew everything I am doing—you could be a mighty proud girl, cause I'm trying my hardest to do everything a good and faithful soldier would. Remember, I'm saying my prayers for you. I love you.

Postmarked 3 Sep 1963

Please have fun even if I am too selfish to want you to; but promise me that you will not kiss any boy, if my kisses meant anything to you, and if you can't help it, just let me know if he's really a nice boy or not. I will understand. Please help me. And set me straight if you think I need it. If you find out you don't really love me, I can't blame you. I'll always think the world of you anyways.

Postmarked 4 Sep 1963

I'm sure my parents love you and they feel really good about you being such a very good little girl. Once when I was really depressed, I wrote to my mother and she replied: "Son, she's a lonesome little girl. Sometimes girls find it very hard to stay home all the time. But she's a very good girl and she really loves you."

You should see the letter Art sent me. Susan would pay \$100 to get a hold of it. He really thinks he's in love for the first time. He says its just like you and I. I hope Susan is being nice to you. It really hurts me to see you two fight. If you didn't like my last two letters, don't pay any attention to them. I was discouraged.

We made friends with some people in San Antonio and they gave us an old car to use while we are here for church. In November, we are taking it to Mexico to see the bull fights. Sounds fun, huh?

I know we can be wonderful for each other and will have the willpower to do so. And when we're old and wise, we can be happy and know we made a good marriage and a wonderful life together. I like your deal—I be good and you, too!

Postmarked 10 Sep 1963

Dear Joyanne,

Hi there. How are you this morning? I called you last night but your line was busy for over 30 minutes. Darn! It was good to hear your phone busy anyway, Joyanne.

Joyanne, promise me you won't run around behind my back. I know I shouldn't worry, but dear old Doug N. Is doing just that to Judy and so are a lot of other boys you might know (not the Smiths.) You mean too much to me and I don't even want to smile at nor do I need any other girl. You are my life and my happiness, Joyanne and even though being away from you is so discouraging, I will always love you and my life is for you. Remember that, Joyanne. Please always love me, too, and we can be married in the temple the way we should. Love, John

Postmarked 13 Sep 1963

Dear Joyanne; Hello Wonderful!

Joyanne, how are you doing this afternoon? Its about 11:05 in Utah on Thursday. I just decided to write you a letter during chow time.

What would you like for Christmas? I've seen some wonderful gifts I would like for you. Joyanne, I would very seriously like to know how you feel about a ring because I don't want to break your heart if you're sure that's what you want. I really love you and anything you could ever want, I will want to give you. They have something down here that you could treasure all of your life, and then you could wait until just before I went on my mission or until I got home to get your diamond. Really, though, I know by the time my mission comes around, I'm going to want you to be wearing the biggest diamond there ever was. I still have some growing to do and I think we should wait until just before I leave on my mission, but I'm sure going to have a lump in my throat if you open your present this Christmas and it's not a "promise of eternal marriage (diamond)." Really, I want it for you so much but I just don't think I'm ready. What do you think? Tonight I'll finally write my parents and see what they think. I have to go now. Bye! I love you. John

Postmarked 14 Sep 1963

Dear Joyanne,

You're the most wonderful girl in the world! I just got your letter that you sent Sep 12. (Don't remember when that was) You brat!! I've been crying ever since I read it. Don't worry, Joyanne, because I won't change except to grow up a bit and to learn to love and appreciate the wonderful things I have (you).

I hope I can be the great guy you think I am. Joyanne, you know I don't understand you completely. (You are a girl you know) but I know exactly how you feel and I do understand. No one except a girl like you could go through the dust the ill wind blows except you.

Don't be dis-satisfied, Joyanne. If you're doing your best, then I am satisfied and so is that someone who is watching over you.

Growing up is painful. Remember when you used to hold me and comfort me when I cried on your shoulder? I know you are facing some of the same lonely problems, only you have no one to hold your troubled heart and say, "I understand."

I do trust in what you do and I really feel ashamed for riding you about being good, but I can't help but worry about you because you are so sweet and young and you are so pure—and I love you. Joyanne, things are very hard to understand. Don't try and face everything alone. Just once let your parents or your bishop or your seminary teacher help you. Please write to me and tell me your problems.

I think I'll understand you as well as any two people could understand each other, Joyanne! I think you're doing just wonderful. Keep you chin up, Joyanne. All good things in life are hard to come by. You always be yourself and I'll never be sorry.

Joyanne, it's hard for me, too. Bad little things get in my mind and they grow like a weed. Don't worry though cause my soul is made of DDT. Be a brave little girl now and Joyanne, even if you do let down, I'll know you're trying your hardest and I'll love you just as much, so no matter how it works out, you'll just have to marry me – so there!!!! And one more thing—you just better not sign any more letters without your love [unless you really don't mean it or don't know].

I'll always love you but I can't be happy unless I have you. I never knew what joy was until we loved each other and I'm never going to give you up my little lady. I'm glad you write letters that humble me once in a while – but not too often. I'll dehydrate. And when the world slaps you in the face, slap back and remember soon we'll be together and nothing –not even death– will tear us apart.

Now chin up and lets be happy to have each other's love. Your love is so wonderful that I will die for you without even knowing why. Crazy? I don't think so. God loves you, too, Joyanne, and He will never find a better lamb in his flock either. So, you're heaven to me. Love always. John.

Postmarked 21 Sep 1963

Today is a beautiful sunny day at Ft. Sam. This morning our company marched in a parade. Most of the boys went on pass about noon. Richard and the Smiths and Doug Norton and some other guys from Salt Lake went to Corpus Cristi. It is a seaside town along the Gulf. I am CQ and on alert squad so I'll be spending all my time in the orderly room. Yesterday Doug and I had a big (not mad) fight and today we are both so sore we couldn't even get out of bed. Pain!

Joyanne, what is this business about you won't take my ring before I leave for a mission? You had better or I'll spank ya! I mean it. Really, I want you to take my ring before I leave, but I can see why it wouldn't be good, too. We can discuss it when I get home, though, so don't worry. We will discuss college, too.

I understand your being tired because you're a very fragile girl, but you just better not feel lonely and depressed. Don't be so concerned about your letters. They all sound wonderful to me. One thing really worries me. You know all these guys down here can go out and flirt and take girls out and they still write home like nothing has happened. I think it's a lax attitude and I sure hope you don't feel that way. I'm sure trying hard for you. I love you so much because you are such a wonderful girl, Joyanne. You mean so very much to me. Time will go fast and we will be together again. One thing I have always loved you for is your sincerity and your honesty. You would really be surprised at all the people who have been impressed and who admire you for your modesty, honesty, cheerfulness and sincerity.

Postmarked 22 Sep 1963

Hello Beautiful!

Well its morning again. How do you feel this morning? I can't wait to wake you up some morning and cook your breakfast for you.

Last night I didn't have much to do because I was in charge of the Orderly Room so I laid in bed and watched TV till 2:30 am. It was great. It goes on all night here. I watched Lawrence Welk and some of the dances they had and some of the music was the same that we have danced to sometimes when I've felt we could just dance forever without a care in the world. It reminded me of how it felt to hold a wonderful good girl in my arms.

We have a lot to be thankful for, Joyanne, and life offers us so much. We have a lot of growing up to do, but we've been handled so carefully, we won't have any worries if we just remember our faith, love, and our principles.

Postmarked 24 Sep 1963

Guess what! A black widow spider got me. My leg is about as big as a barrel and as sore as pain could be. I can't even get my clothes on. But I'll live. Darn! This one was about as big as a tarantula and he couldn't make up his mind whether to eat me or bite me. Its killing me and if the swelling goes down I will go and play basketball for San Antonio's mighty church team. I'm going to be a guard— of the water bucket. I went on emergency sick call and they gave me some shots and pills. They are really making me sick, so I'll write when I feel better.

What ever gave you the idea I'm swearing? You know better than that. And I'll go to church if I ever stop getting weekend details. Joyanne, you can trust me. I'm being just as good as a boy can because I want you to be my missus. I know you're being good because you're so sweet and true.

Its so busy but boring down here. I don't have any time any more. We are beginning to have racial problems here, too, so pray for me. I'll be a good hubby for you. You will be the greatest, sweetest little wife a guy could want. You know you're the spirit of my happiness and my lifelong desire now is to make you happy.

Joya  
fickl  
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be mushy. You're are the most beautiful girl that I've seen for years & you're so sweet & such a wonderful girl you make me cry with love for you. You can kiss like a Greek goddess & you just leave me on cloud nine. You are so modest & sincere that you drive me crazy. Seriously I do love you so very much for just being the wonderful girl you have always been. God must really be proud of you, and he must love you so very much for being the good & sincere girl you are. I love you too & I do know that we are meant to make a blessed life for each other. I do want to marry you. I love you so much that you will have to talk fast to keep me from

nne, I've always thought girls were dumb and e, but you're given me a lot of respect. I never ght I could get as far as being smart, you sure w how to wrap me up and I couldn't be more py. All I ever needed was that thing called h" and you've done your part to prove that re the one I want and always will.

marked 28 Sep 1963

saving lots of your letters, but I don't have room all of them. I plan to keep them and read them and over again when I am an old man and then laugh and remember how wonderful you were. be you will be across the living room in the ing chair near our fireplace smiling and embering, too. I hope so with all my heart. We ld be terribly happy. How would you like a age in the grassy mountain tops where we could and spend a few days a year? I have the neatest on to take you for a ride in. You will love it. e is a beautiful winding river that runs along the . The hills are covered with beautiful flowers. e are lakes and cabins and all sorts of wildlife. uld you like to go? Fine. If you marry me, we build a summer cabin there — .

Postmarked 28 Sep 1963



Postmarked 1 Oct 1963

1 pm: I am as of now confined to the barracks till Saturday because some rats in our company can't keep their living areas straight. Its really unfair, but that's how everything is here.

Postmarked 2 Oct 1963

Hi Tiger,

Well! I finally got paid. I sent \$20 home for our fund, \$20 home for tithing, and put \$20 down on your Christmas present. I paid all my debts and now I'm broke – but I only have a month till next payday. Boo -hoo. Every guy in the barracks is sitting on my bunk “gambling” away his money. Last night they all came in drunk. Today we had dehydrated sea rations for chow and the army gave everybody a handful of assorted cigarettes for dessert. They were 6 years old and so was the chow. I got on the sergeant's black list and am on 1,001 details.

Everything is depressing and horrible here. You are happy and good and wonderful and the memory and anticipation of you brings the spark of life that keeps me going. Your letters are sweet and exciting and understanding and sincere just like you are. Don't worry about other girls cause there aren't any. All I ask of you is that you stay out of traffic, don't get sick, leave bad boys alone, try and understand me, be good to your Mom and say your prayers.

You will have a while to decide whether you would always be happy with me and when you are really sure of what you want.....if its me....well, that's what our fund is for and that is what I am saving all my heart and soul for. Be good and write. Love, John

Postmarked 8 Oct 1963

Well Hi There!

How did you like conference? Its neat, huh? I went to a fast and testimony meeting right after. It was so terrific—it really scared me in a way. You could really feel the spirit.

Well, about that course: I was in charge of the litter team and Richard was #2 man. We had to crawl up about 1000 yards to our patient under live machine gun fire. We found him in bad condition. He was in severe pain with a sucking chest wound, an open fracture of the femur; staggering from shock. We applied a tourniquet, pressure dressings, and an improvised splint for the fracture of the femur. Then we loaded him on the litter and we just got out of the area when the sergeants (horrible enemies) blew up the place

running off with you. I'm waiting  
faithfully for you but I sure miss  
holding you cradled in my arms. Johnny  
I love you so much. Please take care  
of me because when im with you im  
in a world of fantasy & without you  
I sometimes feel lost; but most of the  
time I remember to plan for the future.  
So you see I am muching too. Don't  
ever leave me even for a second <sup>tears</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>second</sup>  
I need you so please let me love you  
always. You are my only life & happiness  
always & forever so ~~keep~~ keep  
being yourself & we will be  
married & be one & happy for  
always.  
Love John

where we had been. We went through mine fields, barbed wire fences, and other harrowing obstacles. Finally we came to a river. Immediately we improvised a raft, loaded our patient, and started across. When the reached the middle of the river, the enemy sergeants caught up and began shelling us with KING SIZE firecrackers. We were getting soaked. Finally we reached the unit aid station and gave the patient an IV infusion to replace lost blood. Then, sweating and dirty, we took off our helmets and smiled. We had finished our day on the obstacle course.

12 Oct 1963

I'm still behaving and I'm sure its worth it because you mean a lot to me, too, Joyanne. I don't quite understand everything about us and our lives yet, but I guess we have a long time to learn. I know I love you very much. I can't help that. You mean everything in life to me. You're the nicest girl I have ever known and just as fun and darling as can be. I have more respect for you than I have ever had for any person (except for a few adults) in my whole life. You are so warm and wonderful and I know you need love as I do. I hope I can always love you and be a good light for you always. I, too, will try and learn and find the path for us and I will try to make you happy. Please help me to bring joy and happiness into our hearts together. Be sweet!

Postmarked 13 Oct 1963

Oh, I am so happy to have a nice girl like you to keep me sane in this wonderful (haha) Army. I don't know what I would do without you either.

Joyanne, I just don't know how my letters could help you when even I can't read them and you tell me my last letter was pretty good. (Ho! Ho! Ho!)

Joyanne, I really do understand you and I know its hard but I have a lot of faith in you and I know you do what you think is right. I'm mighty proud of you, too, Joyanne.

You've taught me respect for you that I never knew anyone was worthy of. You deserve so much and I really know you will give and receive the best. You're not a bit silly to me. Its just hard when you are alone, I know because I feel the same way sometimes.

I would be proud to be yours someday. You're pretty smart for a girl. I don't need to forgive you for anything. Your soul has been the happiest spot in my life. We have made mistakes, I'm really sorry for, but we've been blessed and perhaps we can grow and learn to understand together. There is nothing I can feel let down for because of you. My admiration and respect (plus love) for you is great. Our love can grow and it will. There's all the reason to behave here because something special is worth waiting for.

You better stay out of traffic, away from canals, and etc. I mean it. But if anything did happen, I would want only to spend my life taking care of you ....so don't get hurt or sick and stay in A-1 condition.

I think our children would be good and happy, not because of our individual influence only, but because of the wonderful environment they would grow in.

Sometimes I don't think you are old enough to be so serious, but if you are still in love with me, there is no doubt in my mind that in the future (within the coming years,) we will be married. There is no doubt either about myself because I will always love you.

I'm glad you realize what a good friend Merlene is. That is a sign of maturity. I think you've made some wise decisions, Joyanne.

Well, today I played basketball. We Utah boys are getting quite a reputation and someone is always

challenging us to a game, rumble, moral status, or etc. We: Utley, Norton, Webb, Smiths and Bills, really find excitement due to these circumstances.

Laundry service is great. They wash my shirts so clean I can't even see them. When you get one back, it is transformed into a cape because there are no buttons.

The ants down here have highways between ant holes. All ants travel along these paths--well, it so happens that Ant Highway #91 runs across my bunk--and they chew me to hamburger. Mosquitoes and ants are killing me and I'm getting out quick.

Joyanne, never forget that I love and respect you. Sometimes I cry because I am so lucky to love and be loved by an angel. Never let anything happen between us because I owe you my life and soul and we could be so happy sharing our great loving, working and learning and sharing together for always. Romantic, huh? Love, John

Postmarked 16 Oct 1963

What a great deal you have given me. Without your spark of joy in my heart, so much of these last 3 years would have been so wasted. I never knew what it was to love or give. You have taught me this, Joyanne. You have taught me the great importance of life and made me realize the great gift of love and respect. Joyanne, if it is only right, as I pray it will be, I want to be with you always and love and guide and learn with you. Your goodness and high standards express yourself as the kind of person who anyone will look up to. You have been a wonderful friend to me, Joyanne. Thank you for your joy that has made life so wonderful. You are really a pretty girl.

Postmarked 21 Oct 1963

Sunday pm

Dear Joyanne,

Hi there! Well I bet you thought I had forgotten you, huh? Wrong! I just recovered from KP and I got up and made it to priesthood and Sunday School. Everything is fine here--a little boring. Did you figure out that one letter I wrote to you. Don't worry. I just wrote it to be a meanie. Haha I am sorry though.

The Smiths are writing. Norton is writing and Richard and Webb are asleep. Exciting huh? Kay wrote me a letter and said that you had a sharp new jumper and that your hair was a little longer. She said you really looked cute.

Now for the latest gossip:

- 1) Mom and Dad have gone deer hunting.
- 2) Charlene Wright got married.
- 3) Jack Mitchell and Bonnie Bishop got married.
- 4) Judy Weaver ---- and her boyfriend ran off to the Army
- 5) Larry Yates got married in the temple to a girl from Granger.

There! I can't wait to join the Relief Society! Haha



Night before last I dreamed that we were at a big dinner for us – everybody was congratulating us. (I never thought about why they were congratulating us till just now,) Anyway, we were having a wonderful time and I was observing the warmth and radiance of your personality as you greeted your friends. We were very happy. About the time I woke up, (Curses)

There was a guy getting dressed in the middle of the night. He wanted to get over to the mess hall and get a good KP job. We had to be there at 4 AM. Neither of us had a watch but the fellow always wakes up at 4 AM, he said. So we got up, dressed, made beds and away we went. When we got over there it was 2 AM. I almost died. We climbed back in bed and overslept and got the worst jobs on KP after all.

Well, now you know what I do in the Army. Last night I got 21 new mosquito bites. They would have dragged me off, but two friends held me down – that's serious.

Joyanne, I love you very much. I always keep right on hoping things will work out for us. If they didn't, I still would always consider you the most wonderful person in my life and I would always be thankful for the love that we had. You are very good, Joyanne. You will be a good wife for someone. I hope it is me. We both have a lot to do in the future– school, and for me, a mission– if God wants us for each other we will be. If we do plan to get married in the near future, I at least want to get in two years of school. Don't ever worry, though, because things always have a way of working out for the best, so help me to be the best.

I hope you get that big picture quick. That would be terrific. Maybe you'll give it to me for Christmas. It would be the nicest thing I ever got. Be good and don't forget me because I want to come home and love you for always and forever. You mean more than anything or anyone else ever will. Please be happy and remember my great and deep love for you.

John D. Bills

PS I pray so very hard for us. Actually  
I feel like I want to come home to your love  
and never ever ever leave you for a moment.  
Please write and help me. Life is so meaningless  
without your wonderful love nearby. I'm sorry I feel that way,  
but you are just a wonderful girl and I can't help it, so there!!  
You just better love me for always cause I am going to  
always be yours!

Postmarked on 22 Oct 1963

Dear Joyanne,  
Hi Beautiful!!

Joyanne, I just love your darling pictures. They are just as perfect as they could be. Just like you and I am happy.

I sure am glad you're having fun. I loved your letters, too! Just think, only 36 days till Thanksgiving. You make me the happiest and luckiest guy in the world. I think we both will be sure it was worth behaving for. I sure am.

Joyanne, you are just the sweetest, most darling lil girl I've ever seen. I really do love you to pieces. We are going to have a ball for a long time...when I get home.

I am really looking forward to sharing your wonderful ideas and aspirations with you. I can't wait to take you on rides and errands etc. again.

Well I have a KILLER test in the morn, so just be good and I'll write you a million letters. I just have to laugh cause all these guys in my barracks can't understand how come a cute and nice girl like you likes me (I don't know either) but I sure am happy that our love is so wonderful – and it will grow and last for a long time, I know.

You sure have crazy dreams, don't you? Just don't get discouraged now – because you are just too wonderful a prize and I don't plan on losing you for all the OIL IN TEXAS!!

Well I've got to go now but just stay happy like those pictures and your letters and don't worry because soon we will be together again and our hearts will stay together for a long time.

I have a surprise for you but you just have to wait till I come home...please love me and take care of me.

Yours forever and always (I mean that) John

Postmarked 27 Oct 1963

Hi there! I'm just going to Sunday School. I will be a lot better for you when I come home. You are a wonderful girl. If it weren't for you, I'd be a bum. We won't have changed any except for the love and appreciation we will learn. The day I go on a mission will probably be the most lonely of my life. I must go if I am ever hoping to deserve you. But one day will come and you will be repaid for sending me on a mission. If you wait, I'm sure we will be ready for marriage. I sure will be hoping and praying for us all the time. You could go to college and I would want you to write but you could go and have fun and make sure I was the only one for you. I only wish I had a mission behind me so I could marry you now!

30 Oct 1963

Happy Halloween!!! I sure am going to miss you and all the fun on Halloween. I will probably be studying.

Guess what? I feel horrible now. I just had to give a blood infusion into the really heavily-built boy. It was really hard locating his vein and I had to "jab" him twice. It is a pretty painful procedure and I really feel bad. Its all part of learning to be a good corpsman, though.

Joyanne, how are you, really? Are you happy? Do you have things you want? Are you healthy? Have your ideas changed? I am interested in these things, Joyanne...how you think...what you hope....what you believe...things like that.

9 November 1963

Dear Joyanne,

Hello my love! I am now sitting at the kitchen table of a seaside motel in Corpus Cristi. We are all here, tired, and watching some dumb movie at 2 AM. Doug, Richard, Doug Webb, the Smiths, and I all left about 10 AM this morning. Our green bomb ran well and we got to Mexico about 4 PM. You can't imagine how different life is there. Everything is sold right on the street and you bargain for everything you buy. Little children run around and try and steal your money. Old ladies sit on the street and beg, girls try to carry you away, and the men and boys try to sell liquor, guns, knives, and everything else that is unlawful. There are markets all very open, where fruit, trinkets and goods are sold. Horses and wagons clatter up the old cobblestone streets. I wanted to get you a sombrero or a rug cape like they wear, but I didn't have any money and no one else had enough to be loaned.

We have been driving all night since leaving Mexico. We drove around town and looked Corpus over. We found the city's romance site and drove away all the lovers. Mean, huh? That place was really beautiful. It is a park along the side of the ocean; there are beautiful lighted water fountains, and pretty trees and flowers every where. Across the gulf, the city lights shine across the water. It really is beautiful. Tomorrow we are going swimming in the surf, weather permitting.

10 Nov 1963 9 PM

I just got up! It sure would be perfect if I were with you now. Joyanne, I just figured this out and for food, gas, and lodging alone, I am in debt \$10.92. Shame!!!!

The ocean looks really windy— there is a hurricane right around here somewhere. We are cooking our own breakfast – positive death! We are going to a beach on a small island called Padre Island. The Gulf Stream, that warm current of water that runs clear from Alaska, runs right along this coastline. It is supposed to be warm, but you have to be careful or you get carried away to Cuba. Castro doesn't like us and I can't swim that far anyway.

Joyanne, I love you very much. It is going to be terribly hard for us to be good, but just think how happy it will be. Maybe when you graduate, we can go somewhere together. I think it would be a great experience for both of us if we went about everything in the right way.

postmarked 13 Nov 1963

Hi Lovable!

Remember when I called, you said I should get a letter that day. Well it finally got here. The mailman took a vacation!

Joyanne, I think medicine is a fine field. I have considered being a "Mad Scientist," or a "Beast Surgeon." Seriously, I would like to be a bone cracker (chiropractor).

I am very satisfied to hear that you did well on your marks. Joyanne, I love you a lot, too. Pheasant season is gone.....! But we must go duck hunting together, ok? Tell party.

Joyanne, I owe a lot to you, too. You mean very much to me. Fact is, I just can't get along without you. For a girl, you are marvelous, but you sure are full of surprises.

Oh, (sigh....) I have been playing football for our company. I caught a pass, made a lot of tackles, but mostly I just got smashed. Those guys we play don't mess around like school boys. I am broken to pieces. Will you please give me the love and care I will need to heal when I get home?

I read "A Tale of Two Cities," when I was a sophomore and I loved it. (Fact is you used to remind me of Madame Deforge.) Crazy, huh? Don't ask me why but I'm sorry if that was offending. Besides I was a silly sophomore then. Anyway, I gave 4 book reports on it before "teachers many caught up with me"!!!! I am now reading, Medicine and Man, A Catcher in the Rye, Primitive Song and Story of the Revolution and Superman!

I like your letters, too, Joyanne, I like you and if you will just keep me crazy over life, you've got yourself a hubby. You don't have to suffer any more cause I will come home and be so nice to you every other girl at Hillcrest will be jealous of you. My love has lasted and grown very STRONG. Joyanne, I love you very much and I can't wait to be happy with you again. You are my Darling and I'll love you always..... John

postmark 5 Dec 1963

Hi Darling!

I have been to 3 hours of classes already. They are pretty good for a change. On Thursday, our class will graduate from medical school. We will have met and passed all requirements of a "medical specialist." (If that means anything) We have learned a lot of valuable information and many skills I hope I can put to use someday. A lot of time was wasted, too, but you can't escape that in the Army.

Joyanne, I can't help but think that what paths have been followed were necessary and probably the Army was the right thing to do. (But I wonder sometimes.) It won't be too long before we will meet again. Everything that happens from that moment will determine paths we are to take in later life. For me, it will show just what I am to do; whether it be college, work and saving, a mission, or just what I hope for in life.

You have been a (the major) big influence in my life, and you will have so much to do with what will become of me. For this I hold a deep love and respect for you that because of your great and truly good influence I could never lose. I hope that in some tiny way I have been able to help you, too.

The Army hasn't been fun, an experience, yes, but not fun, although I shall never forget. Some guys had fun but not many had a girl like you to love and worry about. It looks like I worried with just cause alright, without justification. I understand that you have to grow up and I can really feel that you believe what you are doing is necessary so I do understand. Please take it easy on the old man (me) though. You know he thinks the world of you and he's kind of sensitively fragile, too.

After Thursday we will be regular workers all doing jobs most specifically suited to our occupation. I will probably be painting because they don't need any students. I sent your present home today in a shoe box. Can you guess what it is?

How is old Artie? I really miss him, you know. Sounds like Susan gives him a real heck of a time, too.

Tomorrow is KP again. Now it's a 23-hour job because so many troops eat in the same mess hall. It will probably be our last time. THANK HEAVEN!!

I will call next week or on the weekend. I hope you're home. I was so shaken up when I called you, but in 3 minutes you just had me really pepped up and happy. That is until I started thinking afterward that when I said, "No boys," you asked, "not any?" Gal, how many have you been with? Don't say — ok? Joyanne, I hate myself. I'm so jealous. I'll be good now for a while.

Do you like studious boys? I'm a great reader now. I've read many, many books in the last while. At first I just read junk, but now I'm finding philosophy and history much better. Russian authors are outstanding.

Don't you think we should try out dad's camera before we give it to him? If you want to, I think it would be fun to go in together on a Christmas present for your parents.

Just before I came in the Army, I started feeling like I was pretty independent — I didn't need my parents or brother or sisters or anyone for that matter .. I needed you, though. At the time no one could have convinced me differently. Now I'm finding out after all this time I was very wrong. From the impression of some of your letters, I think perhaps you know what I mean. Perhaps you may not find out for a while yet.

So long for now, my only hope and song. I'm still praying for you always. Love, John

PS Really, Joyanne, I can't express the deep love and respect I have for you. It just hurts deep inside. Someday I hope we can share this deep everlasting love. — John



Ft. Lewis, Washington

Summer Camp June 1964 Ft. Lewis, Washington  
Postmarked 30 Jun 1964

My dearest Joyanne,  
This evening my heart is longing for you. ....

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**Madigan Army Medical Center** located in Fort Lewis, Washington, is one of the largest military hospitals on the West Coast of the USA.

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From the second we stepped on that flying chicken coop, it was typical of the great service offered to the Army. Lunch was served on the plane, but it consisted of pickled beans, cauliflower, a dried roll, and a package of Winston Cigarettes!

Fort Lewis is a pretty post with lots of green trees and parks, however we are located in the most shabby section; we heat the barracks and cook on a couple of “pot bellied” coal stoves from Benjamin Franklin’s time. There is a nice gym (but it is closed) and tennis courts (but nobody plays tennis up here) and a pool (with no water). For recreation, I went to church and to a fireside. Saturday I went to see the show – and guess what was playing – HUD! Oh, well, when in Rome, do as the Romans do. I saw it again.

Joyanne, it was just like Army all over again. Boys everywhere and no girls. KP today for 16 hours straight.

I have received my assignment to work in the isolation ward of Madigan General Hospital.

Joyanne, I feel lonesome and miserable tonite. I am just not the type that can thrive with a group of men and guys who are loud and boisterous and whose minds are so differently constructed. At least one good thing—they are Mormons! I know I am just like any other guy, but I hate loud, mouthy, and disrespectful boys. I am sure thankful I have you. There aren’t many people who are so quiet and humble as you. I love you. Ever since I was four or five years old I never could believe that I could fall in love and live a happy life with the girl I loved. It just seemed that I wasn’t meant to. It still seems too wonderful to believe that I have you even now but I pray I won’t ever have to say goodbye. I really do love you.  
John

postmarked 1 Jul 1964

Joyanne, the letter you sent me was the nicest I can ever remember. I know I haven’t been very considerate of you and I also promise to try harder. I am really quite sick over our arguments within the last three weeks. I feel deep inside that I am to blame because I will not treat you in a manner that you can respect me. Joyanne I don’t blame you even though I don’t always concede fault. I hope and I’ll honestly try to be better for you Joyanne.

The ward I am working on in the hospital is the Isolation ward. We handle all patients with communicable disease like hepatitis, spinal meningitis, mononucleosis, pneumonia, and etc. Every time we go into a patients room, we have to mask and gown to protect ourselves. Today, (Friday) is our day off at the hospital.

KP was sickening. I chose the job of washing trays because it sounded so simple. What I didn't know, however, was that there was no hot water. You should try washing 200 trays, 200 knives, forks, and spoons, and cups and bowls – all greasy– in cold water. When I finally finished that night at 8:30 PM, I had to wash all the trays again because they were still greasy.

Joyanne, my love for you grows each day although I don't show it. I know that you have some ideas quite different from mine. We both have ideas – and if you were to give in to my ideas, I would probably break you, if I gave in to all of your ideas, you would shatter me, too. In other words, Joyanne, I believe that we must learn to give and receive and learn to share and sacrifice for each other, but we should not try to change each other, because although such an attempt may seem fruitful, it may leave unseen damage such as loneliness, despair, bitterness or other adverse effects. We don't have to fight if we will just accept each other as we are, not as challenges to change– personalities to mold.

This morning I went to a sporting goods store and bought a \$4 tennis racket and some balls to mess around with. There is nothing but a show house around here and its an hour's walk from here. Yes it is chilly and not much sun. No one gets a suntan that's for sure.

I have tried desperately to find a good book to read but all that are sold around Ft. Lewis are books like "Four Wild Women." So, I've been reading "Mad Magazine."

It really is a thrill to see how some of the older guys wear garments up here. I hope I will be worthy to do so in the near future. I haven't felt right (no spirit of goodness) for almost three months, but I know that when we get things worked out everything will be wonderful again. The three years I have know you will be a guidepost in my life. I have all intentions of MARRYING YOU. I want a temple marriage but sometimes I feel like I'm leaving you right now. Please forgive me and lets lead a happy wonderful life together forever. You're always my beautiful fiancé – and take care of those sweet, soft, luscious, sunburned legs of yours. Love always, John.

[Undated, but had to have been written in July 1964 from military training; Kay had her baby boy on 3 July 1964. John's mother was pregnant with Shauna at this time, due in August.]

Dear Joyanne,

Extra Bad News. Today at 11:30, I suddenly became very ill and had to be taken to the hospital. The doctors seemed very concerned and they don't know whether I'm going to live or not. I guess I'll be up here for at least another two months now. The doctors said it is a rare tropical disease caused by not getting a letter today. The only cure saving me from death, they said, is for me to get a letter tomorrow. I'm crossing my fingers. I have a strange feeling that they are going to let me come home Saturday to die in your compassionate arms.

Seriously, when I think of something like that, Joyanne, I realize that.....I love you and to live this life and beyond with you is the greatest gift life offers. We just don't want to think of each other, though, and when we are married, I hope we can do things for others together. If we can learn to share our great gift of love with others I'm sure we will lead a happy and creditable life together. Sounds tough, though, to ever want to share our time with anyone but each other. I hope we can together meet the challenge.

Good news. My sister had her baby.....an 8 lb. 3 oz blonde-haired boy. I'm just tickled pink. On Sunday (after dinner together) we will have to visit her for an hour or so. Then we can go on a beautiful and serene ride together. Sound OK?

Plan on going to Bear Lake for a day or two. Or somewhere else if you would like.

This bod is extra tired because of the short period of time it gets to rest from the day's stress. The fact is, I'm always tired and I have to guzzle Coke (my first) to stay awake. I love you Joyanne. Behave please and stay out of mischief.

See ya Saturday.

From the Fiancee of the sweetest, greatest character the female world has ever produced. I love you and you never need to worry because I will always be faithful and do only that which will bring respect and honor to you.

Love ya, John

Postmarked 6 July 1964 Fort Lewis, Washington

My Dearest Darling Joyanne,

I am writing to you from a small motel in Seattle off the main freeway. When we finally found a motel we liked we had to go another 16 miles to get off the freeway. Then when we went to get a hamburger, we had to look all over Seattle to find something we could afford.

I am sitting by this swimming pool. In it there is one boy about 19 and one girl about 16. I don't know who they are or if they are brother and sister or boy - girl friends, but there is something about them I just can't stand.

Today I went through this town and I was even beginning to see your name on signs because I was thinking of you so much. Every sign I saw said "Fife" on it. It was the name of a town. Joyanne, I love you very much and I really need you to love me and be the good friend you have always been. The guys here are the same ones who were at Fort Ord except Richard, Larry, and Doug – all missionaries. You have probably heard of Puget Sound (we are going to go somewhere now and I can't write in the car, so I'll write later!).

Hi Darling! How are you? Are you having a hard time being good – I hope not! Joyanne, I hope to marry you and I want to be good for you. I've been a pretty good boy, but since I got your letter telling me things were going to be better for us again, I've been extra-good. Before that, I flirted with a few girls and got in two fights and got run out of the amusement park by the police and that's all. But your letter gave me new hope and since then, I have been the kind of guy you would be more proud of than ever before. You are worth suffering all that this life can tempt me with, Joyanne and I promise I will be the person you can love and respect – faithful and honorable for you.

Joyanne, I do have some different ideas about getting married: 1) I want us to be married now.

2) The other idea is about our being engaged when I go – if I do (you see, I have been thinking about you). Remind us to talk about this when I get home. If you aren't being faithful for me then you can just forget about everything. I won't put up with any funny business on your or my part. You won't get any from me either. About those fights – I am pretty sore and bruised, especially on my nose, arms, back and legs, but so are the other guys. I have to go, but I'll write in the morning. I will love you forever, Joyanne. I love you my darling and I pray for you every night, too. You will be a sweet wife. Love and Kisses, John.

Postmarked 8 Jul 1964

My dearest Joyanne,

I can't help but know how much I love you tonight and how truly blessed I am to have a wonderful girl – you, Joyanne – to share the most wonderful friendship with. Joyanne, I know that if we are always fair and honest with each other, if we respect each other, our love will grow and will have that chance to live a celestial glory together.

Today at about 11:30 PM, I walked over to our unit's post office and picked up a letter containing the ten most wonderful pages of trust and friendship that have ever been offered to me. I am talking about that book you wrote. I was also glad to receive that letter. Your letters have meant more to me than anything or any event during this summer camp.

From the experiences I have had while away from my life with you, I have come to know more surely than ever that this love is the strongest thing that God gave to man along with the gospel; that he might have joy. We have this great bond, Joyanne, and if it is right, we will have a chance to live this everlasting love.

I understand you, Joyanne. I can almost feel the despair and depression that you do, and I know and feel your joy and sorrows. When your letters come from your heart, they really humble me; they can bring tears to my eyes. I realize how you must feel when your Mother cries. She carries a great burden, Joyanne, and the Lord knows this. Joyanne, do you know what I think would be the greatest thing in this world – for you and your Mother to get down on your knees and pray together. Its nothing to be embarrassed or ashamed about, that's for sure. And we are going to be praying together for people we are trying to convert and for each other when I go on my mission, Joyanne. Its going to take a lot of praying and love to keep you waiting when I turn you loose when I leave, Joyanne. I guess that gives you something new to wonder about, huh?

Joyanne, I think the hardest thing you will ever have to face is that moment when you have a problem and no one to turn to. I am sorry you have been feeling this agony but you are not alone, Joyanne. Every joy, every sorrow that is yours is also mine. Every inspiration, every spark of life that bolsters you on gives me a kick in the pants, too.

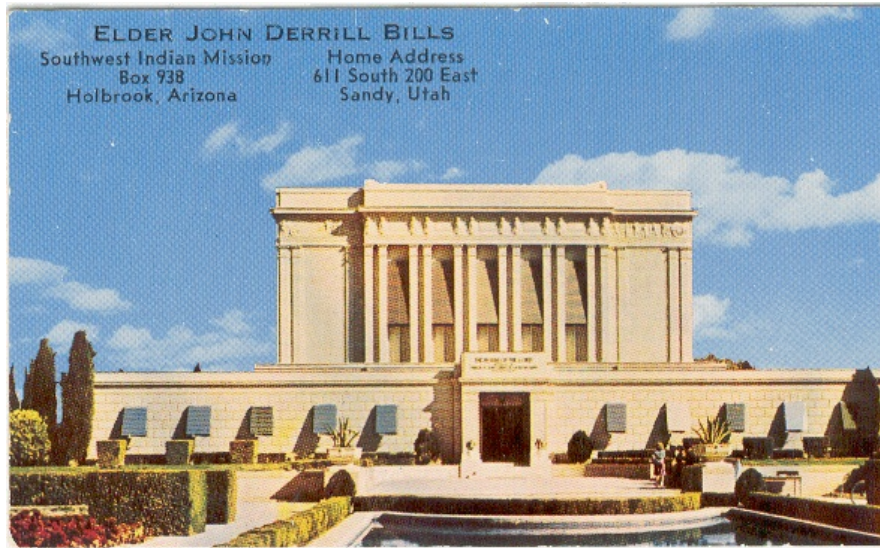
I realize things are really depressing at home. Frankly, it has me worried. I expect and understand this. Seriously, though, I did not anticipate such a reaction so soon. This mission is really going to be rough for you. It has only been about 10 days; imagine what discontent you are going to feel after two months. I don't see any other way except to turn you loose (much as I fear it) when I leave or you will be in a mental institution when I get home. Joyanne, you don't have to worry about unhappiness in our

marriage. I know you have lived around this type of life ever since you can recall but don't forget your neighbors. Don't forget the great and wonderful people you know. Most of them are happy. I wouldn't ever marry you if I didn't know we weren't made for each other. I promise you, though, Joyanne, if we give each other the chance, with love and with each of us doing our part as partners, our companionship can know all the joy man was given the opportunity to achieve.

Now, the latest news. My nose isn't broken. Its fractured. Today I shaved this man. He was really nice. About three months ago he rolled his Cadillac and injured his brain controlling the spine and central nervous system. He now has almost no control over his muscles and he can't walk or use his arms. Mostly he just lies in bed and will be doing so for the rest of his life. Anyway, as I was saying, I shaved him and put on aftershave lotion ; then combed his hair. It was the most attention he had received for months. He almost broke down and cried. It sure made me feel good, too.



## John's Southwest Indian Mission Experiences



Received Mission Call:	7/30/64	Southwest Indian Mission
Farewell Testimonial:	8/23/64	Sandy Fourth Ward
Entered Mission Home:	8/24/64	Salt Lake City, Utah
Endowments	8/28/64	Salt Lake Temple
Set Apart as Missionary:	8/26/64	by Thomas S. Monson
Left Salt Lake City:	8/31/64	Frontier Airlines
Mission Headquarters	8/31/64	Holbrook, Arizona

Aug 24-30, 1964

During this week I spent a very inspirational time in the Missionary home. I registered abt 3:30 Monday. At 7 pm that night we had our first meeting. Each morning we had breakfast at 6:30 am and ate all our meals at Hotel Utah in the basement. Each day our schedules were quite hard. Many of the General Authorities came and spoke to us pertaining to scriptures and teachings of the gospel. Wednesday I had a very wonderful setting apart by Thomas S. Monson, one of the General Authorities. My parents and Joyanne came to see this. Joyanne and I went on a tour of Temple Square. Friday, starting at 5:30 am, we went through the temple, which was very beautiful and inspirational. It was the day which I started to wear my garments. Saturday we spent some of the day washing our clothes and prepared ourselves to leave. Sunday morning we had a Sacrament meeting at 7:15 am. At 8:15 am we went to the tabernacle and listened to the Tabernacle Choir which was a very good way to start off a

Sunday morning. Between 1 pm to 4:45 pm was an open period for dinner with parents. Joyanne came over, Nanette, my cousin, was there; my Grandmother and family. It was nice to eat at home again. That night between 5 pm to 8 pm was a testimony meeting of all the missionaries. 235 missionaries were there who had been in the Missionary Home with me. At the closing we sang (just the missionaries) "The Missionary." My parents, Joyanne and I left, and I was released until the following morning when I would leave for my mission.

Aug 31, 1964

The language is so discouraging. We study hard and then each month are tested. If we don't pass, we are sent to an English division, or home. My release date is August 31, 1966.

I experienced one of the most blessed experiences in my life. I was humbled. You cannot imagine what it does to a man's heart when he is asked to stand before a group and sing a vocal solo, "I Need Thee Every Hour" without piano or someone else to guide him. It was the most humbling experience of my life. The words of the song express my feelings well.

President Baird is an inspired man. For the first time I really feel that our calling and our placement will surely be inspired of God.

I am eating well in the home. We are probably going to Tuba City (200 miles away) to a Navajo language school for two weeks.

The country out here in Tuba resembles Airtiquin Canyon except the canyons and mountains are more flat. Just as dry and dusty. In all my travels (800 miles) the only sign of water is in the mountains where a dried up gulch is called the "Little Colorado." The Indians (and we) get water from government drilled wells (usually within 4 or 5 miles of camp.) All water is carried. Hope I can do a good job for everybody.

Sep 3, 1964

Ya't a "shima!

Am up to my neck in Navajo school after a 200 mile ride on a 20 mph bus. Am living in the basement of the chapel at Tuba City. Met most of the Elders in Navajo division. They came to school for ten days every three months. If you don't keep up in Navajo study you are shipped out. Hope I make the grade.

Tuba City is largest on Reservation with trading post, gas, church house, and a few mud Indian Hogans. No barber or laundromat. One shower and no mattresses or beds for 70 elders gathered. May receive assignment tomorrow for field of labor. Met most of the elders today. They are good guys—a few are diligent—many are warped—most of their girls are waiting—and all have rugged but good spirits and bodies.

My two wishes are for Joyanne's and my future, and to regain that wonderful spirit I felt for a while in

the mission home.

Sep 4, 1964

We have a mighty sick bunch of boys today. Seems we have a case of food poisoning. It hasn't hit me yet. My diaphragm sure is sore from trying to pronounce Indian words. How would you (Joyanne and Mom) like a child on the placement program in a year?

A couple of missionaries just came in – honestly they look rougher than a couple of fur trappers.

At 9 pm, just found at I am supposed to recite a dialogue before the class (Navajo) that I have never looked at before. Its supposed to be memorized.

Sunday, Sep 6, 1964

Today as I was sitting in Sacrament and as the tray came to me glistening white in the sun – and as the people partook of the pure water and bread, I knew that it was of God. I knew that it was in remembrance of the flesh and blood of Christ.

Joyanne, as I sat in this meeting and listened to the crying and laughing voices of the small Indian children, I knew that I loved these people. I hope you will be able to love them and teach them as I do. I hope we'll be able to be mother and father to one or two of these children someday.

Sep 7, 1964

First time tracting in a hogan. Old Indian said many years ago he was baptized. He said two Elders had come and put him in the water and he didn't even know why for over 20 years.

Sep 8, 1964

Today I received my assignment to labor at Shonto as a Supervising Elder (assistant) in charge of all missionaries in the Canadian district. I will live with Supervising Elder. We will live in a hut built of stones by a Navajo and are two miles from nearest water hole –14 miles from trading post and 70 miles from a town. Food is horrible. I don't know why I was called to be a S.E. but I know it was by revelation.

Dear Elder Bills:

After prayerful consideration, we your brethren of the Southwest Indian Mission, hereby assign you to labor in the Shonto, Area of Zone 2 District. Your companion will be Elder Daniel Rentz.

Transportation will be a Dodge pickup.

It is our humble prayer that you will enter into this new field of labor with enthusiasm and with a great determination to cause the church to become more effectively used in the lives and homes of the people with whom you are called to labor. God has promised you power and wisdom sufficient to accomplish this great work. Please go forward fearlessly and do His errand.

May the Lord bless and guide you as you go forth to serve these wonderful people of Indian Israel.

Sincerely, Your Brother,

J. Edwin Baird  
Mission President

Sep 10, 1964

Navajo school is like a swimming pool: Once you're in you have to swim or sink. It's a real struggle to survive. One elder from my class of five was transferred because he didn't make the grade.

I understand you have more of a chance for self development here than any mission in the world because YOU ARE THE CHURCH. You teach and baptize people, run the Relief Society, you run the family betterment program, you educate the people – you navigate the “child placement” and also the government school programs. You doctor the people, you are a marriage counselor and you bury them.

We have the greatest responsibility of any missionary in the field, and the gathering of Israel is really on the move. And boy! Are we being watched! Even the children know who you are — and they expect you to live your religion – be ministering the gospel and preach in Navajo.

My new home is a rock shack about 8 square feet. We haul our water in gas cans from about 14 airline miles away. There are no windows and no power. We have one shelf. The nearest neighbor is a 16-year old Navajo girl who herds sheep about 3 miles away. We are in Monument Valley area. We built a latrine about 100 yards away. We have the whole earth for our bedroom. Its rough when it snows or rains. We have two humble mattresses (like you see at the dump) to lie on.

We live in an area most like the dry sagebrush flats around Tabiona (a lot like Cedar Valley). We cover our dishes with a towel to keep the rats off. They ate our brand-new carton of butter last night. Its only a rock hut, but its my own and I love it.

The roads are dirt or solid sandstone and steep and bumpy. (We had two flats today.) The roads remind me of Gardener's Lake roads. The trading post hasn't changed over a century. Most Navajo's make rugs and herd sheep in trade of food. The prices are high. The trader is the postman for the area and is Branch President of the Church. We are in charge of getting the branch organized. The trader doesn't know the gospel upside down and can talk your head off, but he's a good man.

About the Navajos. They come closer to living the gospel of us LDS than any people in the world. They believe the same things, they are very modest. All of the bad influence has been introduced by white man. Their pitfalls are liquor and squaw dances. They have nothing to eat and their hogans are just a mound of branches with rain and wind traversing through. If you smile and laugh, they will smile and laugh. They have faith – when you bless them, they recover.

About my activities: Tomorrow and every Monday, I will be instructing seminary. Today I officiated in Sacrament, prayer,



Elder Bills shaving by rock hut

taxied people to church and helped plan a branch outing to get acquainted with the people of our area. We administered to a girl who sounded like she had TB, and to a man whose knee gave out on him. There is nobody to make decisions or do things for you, so you just learn for yourself. The Church in that area is yours and by golly if you don't do better than your best, if you let down for a minute, you can exterminate the church in that area.

About the only white man here is a trader – our branch president. The Navajo people are all older people or little children so we don't have mutual. Only one man in our whole area holds the priesthood –he's a deacon.

Sep 23, Wednesday

We started working on mouse traps. It WORKED! We caught three. Went tracting yesterday. All we found were Catholic, Baptist, and Assembly of God. They were told by their preachers to "run, hide; don't let them in."

The Navajo people are the most wonderful people in the world. They are so humble and they live so close to God. Basically they are good at heart and they have love and happiness that no other people in the world enjoy.

I love their language. It has so much more meaning than any other and the Navajo have none of the filthy words in their language that we do in ours.

Last night was Relief Society. Its really great except Elder Rentz and I were the baby tenders. Don't worry because I sure am learning how to take care of babies and children of all sizes and ages. In no other place in the world could I get this good of training. One problem – I can't figure out what to do when they get hungry because they don't like punch and cookies.

Tues, Oct 12, 1964

Things are going great out here. Up to date I have caught six kangaroo rats. They are really smart so we have to boil their traps, bait them with gloves on, and then they usually steal the bait. The six that I caught I later baptized in a can of water. They are Assembly of God and they really rock and roll when the traps.

. I also taught my much dreaded and growing seminary class. Those kids literally tear me apart. Most of the instruction teachers of other faiths have left.

Nov 14, 1964 Letter to Joyanne:

First of all, there are more important things in the world than money; for one, the Gospel – second, school. Joyanne, you can survive on literally nothing and be happy; but we can't survive without the gospel. Why do you think I left your wonderful heart to come on this crazy mission – because I love you so much and I want our love to be more lasting and meaningful than all of the money in the world could bring.

Second, you can't take your money to heaven. The happiest people, the most humble, are those who are poor and trying to gain an education. They don't know the good food we do, they don't sleep warm at night, but they are happy. Sure money seems to be the biggest reason for marriage failure, as you



learned in home ec, but look at the average type of marriage today. If you can't see there are more important things than money I don't want you any more. The gospel is going to be very first in our lives.

I think your job is wonderful and if you are really happy in your work, I don't want you to give it up, but college is the place for you. You don't need to be a college professor or anything, you just need the opportunity of going for at least half a year and better— a year. Now, if you want to work as long as you can, that's fine. But you could start next fall or the semester after that. I want you to either have a year or a half year of college when I come home, OK?

Stop worrying about me. We will do just fine when I get home, and we will be able to get along just beautifully. It is just silly for you to worry about when I get home. You live a happy life now. If money is really a problem with you, let me give you the facts. I am getting a hundred dollars a month. Just to pay for gas and rent – it costs about \$75. That leaves me \$25 to pay for food, repairs, stamps, sundries, winter clothes, etc; plus send \$10 home a month. And yet Christmas is costing me about \$150. I'll tell you, Joyanne, I've been eating an orange, maybe a sandwich, every day. That's all I eat all day. We are walking everywhere to save on gas. I can't even afford to buy a 29-cent pen to write to you with and yet you are worried about money. Do you want to know what it is like to not be able to buy some thread to sew up a rip in a pair of pants? Do you know what it is like to not be able to afford soap to wash your dirty clothes with?

Darn it, Joyanne. I want you to have the opportunity of going to college. It is up to you, you know—, but you are just as good and just as smart as any girl in this world. You will always feel sort of left out if you don't go. I love you. I'm going to marry you even if you don't learn another thing. Love doesn't take brains but not taking advantage of college will be missing half of your life.

I am having a lot of problems, but I'm trying my hardest for you. I won't let you down. Yours forever,  
John

PS What I am trying to say is:

1. I love you
2. You can and will be happy going to college.
3. Even though you earn your own money, you can afford it. (Apply for a scholarship)
4. Don't worry about finances when I get home. Let's cross that bridge when we come to it.
5. If you are happy in your job, work this year and try school at least half a year next year.
6. Forget about money ever breaking us up. I promise I'll get a good job. We have something far more meaningful than money to keep our love eternal. June 6, 1965

Dear Joyanne,

Am I lonely for you or am I lonely?!! What do I think of my girl going to college? Well, I'm very proud to say the least. I feel without college people don't ever awaken to the awareness of life. So I'm proud of you—I want you to have the opportunity because that's what I expect of my wife. I also expect to reach the goals you expect of a husband.

Nov 20, 1964 Friday

To Mom and Dad:

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Elder Bills

later making love. Well, nothing can stir up the Navajos as fast as something like that.

the temperature has been going down, down, down here in nta. Elder Roper (Navajo) and I worked Shonto Monday Tuesday and moved to Kayenta Wednesday, Thursday Friday.

nesday night we held mutual in Dennehotso. There were lights in the building so we conducted with a flashlight. e was also no heat and the temperature was about -8 es. We have been holding cottage meetings galore. More we ever did with our Senior companion around. I'm sure if Elder Roper and I had six weeks together, we could get baptisms. Our companions are away to Navajo school for week. We are staying in a miserably cold hogan in the ntains east of Kayenta. The only other resident in these tains is an old medicine man. He is a good man when he sober, but when he gets drunk, he sings curses on our n. One night some of the old man's friends came up and planning to put an end to the elders. The elders, however, out and thumbed into town.

know, this mission is really a trial. Sometimes the elders without contact to any supervisors for months. Their h depends on them and if the elders fail the branch fails. dy is around to see that we get up at 6 a.m. Nobody says, is how you do it." So sometimes the elders go far astray.

is what happened in Dennehotso. One of the elders from er area came over and met a Navajo girl and together they into an old hogan. The police found them there hours

We picked up the Elders who life in Donnehotso and went into the hills into "hiding" Monday and Tuesday. The President's Assistant also came out. Late Tuesday night we came back (after the people had a chance to calm down) so the Donnehotso elders could stick up for themselves at the meeting the Navajos will be holding. President Baird is coming Saturday and I have a feeling there may be quite a few transfers made. For this reason we didn't go out to that area we were going to.

About Dec 20, 1964

Navajo school was very good. It lasted Monday thru Friday. Elder Smith and I came through with flying colors, smashing all records ever scored in any Navajo school –in fact we tied with test scores that literally obliterated all other records. I also was asked to bear my testimony in Navajo in front of President and Mrs. Baird. They were quite pleased and decided at that very moment that Smith and I were going to take over Shonto. So Rentz moved out to Dennehotso and Smith and I became the youngest companions in the whole mission. Quite a change from my first week in Navajo school. To

say the least, I was having such a bad time I just cried myself to sleep every night.

Late, Dec 23

We had a party for the branch and about every person on the reservation came. Highlights included the show, giving candy to the kids, eating mutton stew and frybread, watching drunkards fight, and cleaning up all day today.

Elder Smith and I walked 52 miles to get out car fixed and tonight it broke down again, so I have been walking back to the trading post (15 miles) for the last three hours. I must admit I have fallen in love with all the Navajo kids in Shonto. Since I have been a Senior companion, we have been getting about ½ hour late but we really accomplish more than Rentz and I did in a week. I have been taking a Navajo boy about 13 years old with me to help me out when I get snowed under by some gabby Navajos. There is just too much to learn for me to be able to talk like a veteran yet, but we do pretty good.



Dec  
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Elder Bills chopping wood; see snow on the ground and beds, water barrels? This is rock hut out in the middle of desert at Shonto, Arizona.

30, 1964

here I am at 5 am this morning writing letter from our little rock shack by the of the fire. That is pretty early so I have hard time getting up.

Every time one of us has some steam to let off, we go out and chop wood; thus we always have an adequate supply. Right now it is getting cold again, so I had better go drop some logs in ---- ah, heat at last!

We are trying to find Mary (and John) Manygoats to sign up their kids with LDS. We never did find him but came upon a Mormon family of about 16 who were so glad to see us that they laughed and cried all afternoon. We spent the afternoon there and taught the gospel. One of the girls had been to Salt

Lake about two years ago and the light just glowed from her as she told about the big temple and all the Mormons there. Then another lady invited us down to spend the evening. She has a girl on placement and plans to send her son next year. This is about the first time in four years she had wanted the elders.

Smith and I have done more fellowshipping and proselyting in the last three weeks than Shanto has had in 10 months. You can really tell too, because more people are coming to church, drinking problems are decreasing, and testimonies are being restored. We are even working for a home teaching program. Today was about the best day of my mission.

Our diet since Christmas has consisted of 2 cans of string beans, 1 of carrots, water, popcorn balls, three potatoes, half a can of ham, also a piece of fudge per day.

I am healthy, but quite plagued by "Navajo sores" like impetigo. They are passed by hand or other contact and spread scabs and drainage over the body. My face is quite badly infected.

We have been doing pretty good missionary work lately despite the odds against us which include mainly: car troubles, money problems, and drinking. Every single morning for two weeks something has broken on our car. One day we got our car going but the mud was so bad we couldn't go anywhere. Money is precious and we have none because of car repairs (about \$110 so far this month) and stupid fines from the mission home. Our last problem is a new fad called "getting drunk." Even our church members join the daily drunk parties in front of the trading post. However, we are still doing alright. In fact we are signing over kids from other religions to LDS Seminary by the dozens. We just got six yesterday and we are going to baptize their parents. I still teach seminary. We are working to baptize all of them. Last week my class got presents from Salt Lake high school seminary classes. Boy, were they happy. We plan to teach them how to use things like powdered milk, pancake flour, powdered potatoes. The government gives them these things, but the Navajo just throw it away because they don't know how to use it. About all they earn (mostly from sheep) is an average of \$200 per family per year. Also in Relief Society, Navajos are going to learn to knit; whites will learn to weave.

How is this for scary? This Navajo boy said this old man we rent our shack from is a Yinigoshii Navajo. I really believe it, too, because today I honestly saw him doing a ballet, very gracefully across the prairie and his feet weren't even touching the ground.

Jan 10, 1965

Saturday Elder Smith and I decided to take a diversion day and go ruin hunting with Mark Ellis. It was a really rough hike getting down in there. Mark heard about these ruins from an old Navajo man about 5 years ago. We picked up the Inscription House Elders and spent the rest of the day trying to find out how to get down the canyon. Finally we found some little foot and hand holds cut by the ancient cave men. Also a lot of writings and inscriptions. The canyon was just like the Grand Canyon and the only way down was straight. There was a 3-inch walk cut in the side of the wall and finger holds chipped away also. In one place I lost my footing and went sliding down right over an 800-foot drop off. Just as



I went over I stuck out my arm and grabbed a bush. I had to hang there about ten minutes while those guys figured how to get me out.

When we reached the bottom, we found quite a few ruins – about 12 big ones. No one had ever even touched them and things were lying undisturbed. They were probably about between 1100 to 600 years ago. The ruins were of stone built in the cliffs. It was too late to climb out, so we spent a very cold night huddled around a fire in a two-story ruin. We climbed out on Sunday. We found a lot of broken pottery and Elder Gresko found a basket and a bowl untouched since used by these cliff dwellers, lying in one of the ruins.



Jones Canyon which was later flooded by Lake Powell; see John in opening.





Jan 25, 1965

Today we have to drive 300 miles round trip for a meeting with Pres. Baird and Saturday we drive to Blanding, Utah to baptize (I hope). Elder Smith and I are going to start teaching church to 91 LDS signed kids at Shonto school on Sunday. At church today we had 15 people.

The last couple of nights we have been freezing to death because our axe handle broke and we can't chop any wood. Also someone broke into our house and stole Elder Smith's camera and my electric razor.

The Protestant minister has been telling our contacts a lot of lies about us and the school officials and the Navajo officers really make things rough for the Mormons because we teach so many people and so many of them side with the Mormons.

Jan 27, 1965

This morning the Elders and the branch presidency met with the district presidency. We talked about getting the branch organized, also primary and mutual, and the elders were assigned to hold church for 91 LDS preferred students at the boarding school. Plus branch church, home teaching, Relief Society, instructive classes and priesthood. I don't see how we can get any proselyting done.

When we finished the meeting we headed for Farmington for a meeting with Pres. Baird. At Kayenta we threw a rod and spent the rest of the day thumbing.

Jan 28, 1965

We talked to Pres. Baird about branch work taking all the time. He told us to do just what we want; help branch if necessary, but get out and proselyte. He also told us to go ahead and get our truck fixed.

Jan 29<sup>th</sup>

We tried to get our baptisms ready for tomorrow but one family we couldn't reach because of snow and the other family ran away when they saw us coming. We found out that their brother, a Protestant minister, had filled them with horrible superstitions about the Mormons. I hope we can teach them more.

Feb 7<sup>th</sup>

Taught Sunday School at Shonto School today for the LDS kids. The Navajo minister, of course, had herded all of our kids into his class when we arrived. Snow is VERY DEEP. No car. Lots of walking, no church and riding school bus to get back and forth. This Mexican lady has sort of adopted me and so she gives me shoes, pants, and mends and irons my clothes. She has six kids.

Feb 9<sup>th</sup>

Today I am sitting in the trading post because I have a mad craving to discover what's going on in the community. The snow is simply beautiful and it just keeps coming and coming. It has been snowing solid for three days, they say its as much snow as has been around here for quite a few years— about two feet deep now. We have no car and no axe so we are temporarily residing at the trading post. Of course, we are accomplishing nothing unless it is to make the Protestant minister mad by making sure

that he doesn't steal all of our kids for his Sunday services.

Feb 14, 1965

The lady who keeps my film projector and filmstrips (cartoons of the parables of Jesus) took off this weekend and so I had no material to teach our 91 seminary children at Shonto Boarding school with. Well Mark told us to take the trader's truck (about three times as large as a regular pickup) and go to Kayenta to pick up some material. Well, I had this strangest feeling that I should drive, but it was Elder Smith's week to be boss and he wanted to drive so I didn't say anything. We got out to the highway and headed for Kayenta. Well as we were going along (it was about 9 PM) about 500 yards down the road and I saw something on the road and I told Elder Smith "there's something down there in the road," but he just kept driving. Then I said, "Elder Smith, there are some horses down there! STOP!" Well, then he saw them and hit the brakes when they were only 100 feet away. We went into a skid and somehow fish-tailed through the whole herd about sideways. We hadn't even slowed down at all and then suddenly the screeching of the tires stopped and we seemed to be in the air. I knew we were going over so I ducked my head down between my legs and then put my hands over my head. I was sure bouncing and flying all over inside of that cab and all I was thinking is, "I'm wondering how much longer it will be before I feel the fatal blow." We must have been in the air for about four or five seconds and then we came down right on top of the cab. Perfectly upside down and all was quiet. I heard Elder Smith say, "Oh no!" And then, "Elder Bills?" I said, "I'm fine, let's get out of here quick!" He climbed from on top of me where he landed and we scrambled out the door. The first thing I saw were those stupid donkeys looking at us like we were crazy. (I also noticed that the mules had tracked the snow down all around us. There were tracks and droppings like they had been camped on the highway for a while.) I reached in and turned the key off and the lights because a lot of gas was leaking out. Then I grabbed a flashlight from inside and went to work.

The first car that came along I sent to Kayenta to get the police and to notify the Trading Post. The mules left the road and went out into the sagebrush and were doing their hee-haw sound and their voices sounded human just like someone (or some spirit) laughing at us.

We flagged the cars around as they came till finally a P.I.E. truck came along and let us in their cab to keep warm and they also set out flares. It was 12 degrees below zero.

Eventually the police came and took Elder Smith back to their car to interview him. He was back there about 30 minutes. They never asked me any questions. I asked him if he told them about the mules and he said, "Yea. And they went out and checked around the area and never saw any evidence of mules ever having been there and they gave me a ticket for wreck-less driving."

The amazing thing is that the truck landed on the cattle rack and it took all the blow and shattered the rack but minimized the impact on that cab. We weren't thrown out and we never hit an animal and we were both okay and then the police find no sign of the animals.

The night when Smith and I wrecked there was about 2 feet of fresh snow on the ground, no wind, and the moon was out. I saw those horses first about 2000 feet away. I told him but it never registered with him till we were right among them. Then all I remember is flying over and over through the air and then every way I looked those horses were around. Then as we waited for hours for someone to come, the horses wandered up in the trees and laughed. They really did. They laughed like a hyena.

Well here's the strange part Elder Smith never told me before. When he and the patrolman went back to check the tracks ½ hour later, there were no horse tracks at all. Literally no sign of any horses even being there. And yet, Elder Smith wrecked when he tried to miss that herd of horses that ran right out in front of us. How's that for a killer?

We had been warned by an Indian we were teaching that the man who owned our hut was a witch and had been bewitching us that something bad would happen to us in a vehicle. All our vehicles kept breaking down – no matter what we tried to drive it would break down. If we rode with others, their vehicle would break down. Then we were loaned the trader's truck and had this experience. All I can say is that there were supernatural forces at work that night that were way beyond our control. I came out with a deeper realization of the power of Satan and also a deeper realization of the Lord's influence and power and His intervention in our lives.

Feb 21, 1965

Since Elder Smith rolled the trader's car we have absolutely nothing to get around in. This morning we taught Sunday School at the boarding school. We had 85 of 91 children there.

I think this generation we are teaching will be the very last ones to speak the Navajo language. Already most areas on the reservation are largely English speaking. Shonto is one of the very few Navajo speaking areas left on the reservation. Boy I sure would hate to have to teach in English!

Navajo school was really good. I got the highest score out of forty who attended this school. I still have two tough ones to go through. (Forty-four years later while serving a second mission at Heber Valley Camp, the head of the Young Women Camp committee came up to me one day and started telling me about how I had attended a Navajo language school and was so anxious to know my score that I woke up my instructor in the middle of the night to know how I had done.....the instructor happened to be her brother, Elder Brotherson! He had told her the story when he found out I was serving in the same mission that she was over.)

One thing I want to get is Navajo rugs because the people will sell them to me so much cheaper. As soon as I get off my mission, I am going to start saving for things like furniture and appliances and so forth. Then all I will need is a house. It thrills me to think I have a whole lifetime to study and to build my household and to work in the Church.

We decided to check Shonto Canyon out for ruins so we just took off walking. Well we found some pottery pieces in a stream and followed the source and about 10 miles down the canyon we found a mesa with straight walls on all sides. On top of the mesa is a whole city of ruins all covered by sand and rocks. An old Navajo man told me it was the Navajo's old traditions that they buried their dead in holes in the rocks and in caves. We started kicking around with our feet. I was horrified when we saw the skeleton of a baby. This Navajo man claimed he could identify this child...and it scared us. We decided this was something we shouldn't mess with. We are going to call an archeologist and maybe they will let us help excavate.

March 1, 1965

About the wreck: Elder Smith's driving privileges were revoked; insurance paid about \$1,000 for repairs and I might have to split the remaining \$132 bill with Elder Smith.

Our house has been broken in to about six times and the Protestant Minister hates us; the devil has appeared to me in person quite a few times; our car threw that rod; Elder Smith rolled the truck; we've been sick; our axe handle broke so we had no way to chop wood. As far as organization goes for two straight months we've had no meetings because of the snow, for the last month and a half we have had no car; our rental meeting house is under construction. It took us exactly 22 days of walking this month to get to our seminary and leadership meetings.

March 7, 1965

Everything I own wore out all at once and I've already spent my whole month's allowance trying to restore my belongings. Most of my clothes and sewing kit, electric shaver, camera, and stove pump were stolen. We are still hitchhiking from two to three thousand miles a month.

Next Navajo school is my big final. It includes giving a talk in Navajo, a written and an oral test. If you pass you graduate, if you fail, you terminate. Of the last group of 11 who took it only 3 passed, so I'm going to have to study pretty hard this month.

We got the sharpest girl for our home. She's really a doll! Don't worry, though, she's only eight. The caseworker for the program interviewed her and said she's one of the sharpest he's ever interviewed. All placement program kids from Shonto go to Phoenix, so I had a lot of finagling to do to get her placed in Salt Lake (with my parents).

July 25

Sun nite 25<sup>th</sup>

My Dearest Joyanne,

Joyanne, we're starting a three-day fast tonight and I feel really humble and really scared....I haven't been so scared for almost six months. Joyanne, how can I tell you how much I love you and need you. I know its up to a greater power than myself and realize I've surely had my share of opportunities. It makes me feel pretty humble and also very much dependent upon your love. You're a very wonderful girl – probably much better than I deserve– and I respect you and you are a wonderful example for me to strive for. May I truthfully say you've given me life; light to see; a heart to feel JOY; a smile which reflects laughter; and an eternal hope of eternal life with you at my side, knowing we can forever walk hand in hand. You've brought me a reason to live; happiness; a love of our Gospel. I thank you and love you always.

Don't think I'm not worried; Suddenly I remember my college days: 9000 boys roaming, scheming, forever chasing those of the opposite sex. The majority of the male set are returned missionaries desperate for a companion and being advised by church authorities to hurry and marry. Acting cool and subtle at first and pretending all action "just for fun" they find all girls are open for hunting and find particular pride in breaking up stable, happy engagements.



Boys at the Y come in an assorted variety:

The fun and active type; the athletic; the nice boy, the creep; the carnivores (those who pose as ward teachers, bishops, grocery boys, the brain who will help you study and etc.) Also we may include the elites, the pickups, greasers and boys whom are met at games, record hops or class.

One class I recall was extremely obnoxiously prominent: Social Dance. The boys who enrolled were those who were serious hunters. Romances usually became thick and mushy. Well, all I have to say is by heck, I'll be lost without you.... But the "Y" will have 1 million activities where you can cheat on and have a good excuse. You'll know within your conscience when its wrong.

So remember, Joyanne, you're engaged, and its all the way or not at all and if you fudge, I'll drop you so fast your head will swim. So if you can't handle yourself save me some trouble and let me know at that very moment.

If you're going to hang in (and I don't mean try) I mean really hang in 1000% then I won't ask another question and you know I'll gladly be yours any day. To me its more than what seems OK at that exact moment; it's a question of love, devotion, sacrifice and honor. That's what you can expect from me and why I came on a mission and I expect the same devotion of my wife. Now I can't stand the suspense any longer..I've had 3 letters since I left Shonto. I don't know whether you're even alive or not. If you can't be 1000% fair to me, let me know. Please write your answer one way or the other and mark an "X" by the date so I'll know its that letter. If you say yes, then I'll be your good fiancé faithfully until I can change things to a more permanent status; If you say "no" then just don't bother to add anything else.

Mail comes and goes on Tues and Friday. Hope you hang in. Love, John

PS I took a love test once and got almost perfect score except for one fault –jealousy. Still got 90% which put my love for you in the very top of "sure thing" category.

Hope you don't get the wrong idea cause I surely love you truly – pray always for your love and success and have faith in you. The question is: how much will you really sacrifice under this real test. I'm waiting and working faithfully.

The real thing is, Joyanne, I'm a missionary out here to do a missionary's work and I can't afford to be slowed down. Up till now you've been the greatest help and encouragement and motivation of my mission. I really need your love and your help, but on the other hand, I can't afford to be hindered in our Lord's work.

So by darn, hang in. Both I and the guy upstairs need your help to get the work done out here and to raise my family in the gospel later on. (1965)

Aug 26, 1965

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm just so proud to have you for parents, and I'm really proud to be representing our family on a

mission, although I don't feel worthy of my calling.

I love you and appreciate the box and food and all you do for me, but most of all, appreciate your love and prayers.

Yesterday was really about the biggest day of my mission. Our placement kids left yesterday and a whole year's toil and heartache was ended. To me, this is one of the most important works to be accomplished out here because where there really isn't a strong branch we lack the real knowledge of the language and there is no example for the people to learn all of God's teachings. The placement program is the answer – when three or four children from one family start going on placement and return to be learned from by their parents – our two best LDS families are those who have been made to behave by their children. My goal (very personal) this year has been to teach and learn from all of the children, to baptize them, pick the leaders, follow up, give them a chance to apply for placement, give each a chance to be interviewed and then help them through. This is why I've stayed at Shonto so long. Otherwise, someone else with different ideas would have taken my place and my program would have collapsed. I've had resistance – the goat and other churches hate and fight our work. Companions have resisted. They feel the program is secret and no one is supposed to find out about it. When I got all of my students (about 30) baptized, my companion fought it. "It was just unheard of and impossible to work through the school," they said. But my dreams were accomplished and last night I saw 28 of my people leave for the greatest experience they will be blessed with here in mortality. About six more from here have left or will be leaving tonight.

It was about the most beautiful sight there ever was as people from six areas came to get their children on the bus for Phoenix and our kids filled about thirty of the forty-eight seats on the bus.

I walked Sue Williams toward her long trip to Salt Lake City. She had a courage and sense of excitement and yet a calm peace that simply made her glow with rapture. I saw happy students, all of them, because they were the luckiest kids in the world. And I saw Sue's big brother break down and cry because they were afraid, and then an inspired hand reached down and took their fear away and they climbed aboard for the first trip into a new life.

Of course we had troubles and my heart skipped many a beat. We loaded Sue on with the only pair of clothes she had to her name– the dress she wore. Her brother left almost barefooted. Another one of our girls was forced to drink some whiskey by her drunken uncle. She felt so badly she cried all the way to Red Lake where we met the bus. Her parents were so afraid and so sad the whole family cried – something Navajo's never do.

At one place we were just leaving the hogan after picking up our student when the government arrived. I pulled off the road and right there we had it out. There was the big wig from the school, some teachers, a Protestant minister, and a Navajo who served as interpreter. When the dust settled down the government had left and I drove away with my people – thankful for our constitution. I spoke in a mixture of English and Navajo so both parties would know the contents and when we left we took one of their students with us whom they had tried to force to go to Shonto. He climbed on the Phoenix-bound bus last night, too, and will exit today at "Phoenix Indian School, where he has had his heart set on going for so long.

June 21, 1966

Dear Mom and Dad,

Once again I'm in at the laundry. My district is really going great guns and I'm very busy in the branch. I teach adult Navajos in Sunday School, oldest boys in Mutual – Monday; Tues, I teach Melchizedek Priesthood and Thurs I teach the older boys in Primary. In between then I'm involved in movies on Friday, Wed night firesides, little league, Relief Society, and of course a district, placements, LDS sign overs, and plenty of study and proselyting.

We proselyte at least six hours daily and find conversion of these people is a long touchy process requiring a lot of care and patience. We're really working hard with our investigators, however.

Of course we have opposition; and yesterday in talking with an Assembly of God minister, I was told this Manuelito girl drowned that the Lord could punish her mother for becoming Mormon. After talking with members and ministers of many churches, I can't believe how narrow-minded and mislead they really are. We had some AA boys speak at our last fireside. They're some more that have allowed their good lives to be snubbed by alcohol. We've cut out our jail meetings and also those with Alcoholics Anonymous. We're searching out prominent people and spending our full time and talents with them.

We're making progress and if we are successful will have the strongest branch Gallup has ever known.

We pulled a few strings at the "Y" and got our gal registered at the Y and probably a scholarship covering tuition and fees. She should be able to keep herself at least the first semester in board and room on her earnings this summer.

July 12, 1966 Holbrook, Arizona

My Dearest Joyanne,

I attempt to write this letter, hoping in some way to be a half-way decent missionary, and to let you know that I really do love you and respect you as the girl I want for temple marriage and eternal life. I'm such a slow writer that before I get a decent letter off to you in pen, I'm always interrupted or my thinking goes off on a "wrong tract tangent."

I'm in Navajo School this week and my students are on their own studying now. This school is being held in Holbrook, Arizona... and its plenty warm down here, too. Around Gallup its been around 110 degrees and I believe its that warm here even in the evenings.

Last time I tried to write to you was at the public swimming pool in Gallup, which we had reserved for a party for our male boys in many of the areas surrounding Gallup. Of course I didn't participate, but sat in the CHAIR serving as a lifeguard in my fully-dressed suit (but without shoes) and writing a letter to you. Just as I finally felt victorious in a completion, I was thrown in and finding myself fully soaked, spent the rest of the evening swimming in my suit pants and dress shirt. Your letter was ruined. This is typical of the normal occurrences that happen each time I attempt to preserve my relations with you through a letter.

When I stop now to seriously consider how I feel about you, I find that: My feelings haven't changed. I

probably feel just like my Dad did; he went through the same experience I am and he is happily married now to that person of his heart. When you talked to my parents just before you broke our engagement, my father was quite upset – probably because he had been through the same experience and didn't want it to happen to his boy. Even though I was pretty hurt at the time, I wrote to him and kindly cussed him out, explaining that you were right, I was unfair in holding you down, and that this is what we both thought was best; that was tough for me to do but I wanted good feelings no matter what happened.

Like scar tissue, I'm stronger now, I won't get knocked down by everyday problems of life, and I'm completely in acceptance with the turns of the road.

I appreciate the way you have done so fairly to me. I realize that at the present you are doing a better job of "gal" than I am "guy" and realize that if anything is presently happening I'll only have myself to blame. I would try to explain why the responsibility of love's duties from my end have been so neglected, but it's hard for me to attempt the impossible. Suffice it to say that the Lord knows and deserves my present life, and if he will not allow me to write, I do my best to serve Him and when He doesn't back me fully in a letter, I just can't get it off.

I made a pact with the Lord to straighten up my major weaknesses before I came home if He would give me your hand in eternal marriage. My pact included the inclusion that negative results on my part bring negative blessings. So perhaps I'm not doing so well and I have more repenting to do before I'm allowed to patch things up with you. Anyway, I'm trying real hard.

I'm proud of your school achievements and the fortitude you have to make decisions on your own. You have the qualities I expect and look for in the companion I choose. You think well, you're quite independent, strong-minded, and yet dependent upon someone to love you, just as I am. I believe you're sincere, humble, and love the gospel and sacrifice the Lord made for us. I think you have good characteristics in your family.

Sentimentally, I want to say:

It's been a wonderful mission experience for me, one which will affect my life eternally. My feelings for you haven't changed. I love you, Joyanne. I know you've changed over two years, but the you inside is still there and it will always be – not changed but the same wonderful person grown older, wiser, and more beautiful as you learn and understand the great plan the Lord has given us to live by. Perhaps understanding love, and the trials given us that we may be closer through growth.

I, like you, hope that we may fill a mission together later. I plan on working in the church during the majority of my life. I'm proud to have you aboard with me, and I know we can be stronger together than either of us could ever be separated. I'm sure of what I want, and I know it's you – all my plans are for you; I'm going to work in Placement Program after school and you will be my wife.

College is the immediate goal and marriage as soon as we can afford it. I'm going to commute this semester, but I'll keep you pretty busy, so keep your date book completely open. The Lord allows man to have a few weaknesses and mine is that "I want you all for my own." So please accept the fact that if you want to play around after I get home, then I will, too, and you won't be part of the game. I'd like to see you with my ring back on, but I know that you believe in this "starting all over," or "getting to know

each other again.” Is this right? If it is, I’ll be patient as long as you’re available to get reacquainted with. I’m looking forward to your coming down. It will be wonderful to be with you again, Joyanne. I think of you always, especially now because I’ll be home so soon. We’ll do a lot of fun things together, I know we’ll have a lot of fun.

Yours always, John – also, I love ya!

July 18, 1966 Gallup, New Mexico

Dear Fefe,

I thought I’d whip off a letter while I have the use of this magnificent electric typewriter. I surely enjoyed your card and its nice to know you’re still thinking of me. I sure have been depressed lately. I guess its just natural with the ebbing of my mission, looking back and seeing where I could have done better and wishing I was coming home a more deserving man of you.

I guess it would help if I knew better where I stand with you. I can really feel the devil working on me and I know I’ve got to really be on the lookout or I’ll ruin all of the good I’ve been able to build up during my mission.

The elders and some of my Navajo friends here and the couple laboring here in Gallop gave me a surprise party Saturday night and it was really great. I got some real nice presents, too. Kay sent me a card that I’d have been happier not to receive. It reflects too well the attitude she has that I’m killing my Mom and Dad and its my fault they’re getting old and all kinds of junk; she about made me ready to come home once.

Everyone else is great. If I had my whole life to do over I would have a lot of repentant and changed ways. I hope you give me another chance when I get home. I guess you’ve had a pretty tough grind going through school, especially with me on your mind occasionally, and wondering, “what shall I do,” and “what’s right.”

It sort of reminds me of a speech I heard last night in church; “A young Navajo girl came up to one of the prominent Navajo men of the church during the Indian Ceremonials last year. She asked, “Do you want to be saved? I can save you.” After careful consideration; that all of these crackpots and drunkards there had been saved and that he’d have to live up there with them if he was saved... after considering this, he replied, “I don’t know if I want to be saved or not.” He went on and explained to the girl that in our church we won’t know whether we’re saved or not until that day of judgment; and that our being saved depends on what we do every day of our lives, “And so,” he said, “I can be a good man now, but I go off the wrong track tomorrow, I won’t be saved.”

As I think of you today, I remember this story and relate it to us; If we’ve made wrong decisions in the past hurting each other, damaging our eternal happiness, we can repent and start again with a clean sheet; and then again, just because we’ve done well till now, we can still throw it away through selfishness, revenge, disrespect, or through our forgetfulness of the true meaning or significance of love.

I hope sincerely that upon coming together again, we can choose the progressive and not the retrogressive path, and I pray that our Heavenly Father will give us the strength to make our dreams and



ambitions come true.

With all my heart, I will try and do my best to really show you the love and appreciation, respect, and reverence I have for you. I hope you can find this same feeling in your heart to give your equal effort for me.

It will be good to be with you again. I hope this time for keeps. Love, John

August 14, 1966 Gallop, New Mexico

Dear Joyanne,

I surely miss you a lot! When I stop to think about coming home, I get a little nervous myself. The missionaries have a word describing this, called "baggy." Well, I guess I'm starting to feel some type of "insecurity" as I fast draw an end to my mission.

I can't wait to see old Richard again. He and I will be best buddies for a mighty long time. Joyanne, I must admit, I sure have fishing fever BAD!! On the other hand, what more beautiful place than the mountains could exist for us to really become reacquainted and reunited once again. (This time, for always, I hope.) I can't believe Glenn Watts getting married. I can't imagine Lynette and Merlene being future mothers. Boy, after being jerked right out of one environment and placed into another, I just expect everything to be the same.

It had been so long since you'd asked about my hair, I decided you no longer cared, and I got it all cut off just two days before your last letter. Oh, woe is me and strike me with lightning, but I can't repent. After two years among the Navajo people, I can't imagine you being too interested in me, but if you really are serious, you'll have to shoo all competitors off before you ever get even to 1<sup>st</sup> base with me.

I am also going into Sociology with an Indian Minor and will work toward being a caseworker in the Indian Student Placement program. I am also interested in school teaching and I imagine we'll be able to take many classes together. Its quite thrilling to think you and I are interested in the same fields.

Looking forward to seeing you, Joyanne. I'm expecting you down about the 30<sup>th</sup>. I hope you can have a real nice trip. I'll be ready to leave as soon as you arrive and we'll plan to have a scenic tour back home.

I guess upon arriving home we'll be able to spend a lot of time together and it sure will be wonderful. I love you very much, Joyanne and I'm sure hoping you'll like me, too, so we can be married in the temple and raise a good family and have a good life together.